GUARDIAN WEEKLY
June 2 1996

Football European Cup final: Ajax 1 Juventus 1 aet (Juventus win 4-2 on penalties)

Hot-shot Juventus take spot prize

Martin Thorpe in Rome

JUVENTUS may not be revolutionaries but they beat the system last week to lift the European Cup for only the second time. Ajax's method has driven many teams to madness but on a balmy evening in the Olympic Stadium here they were knocked out of their aristocratic stride by an Italian side who wanted victory more and got it, albeit on penalties.

Their fourth, by the substitute Jugovic, took the cup to Turin after two Ajax players, Davids and Silooy, had fluffed theirs. As Jugovic's shot hit the net, the thousands of Juventus fans behind the opposite goal exploded in a sea of flares, flags and unadulterated joy.

Fabrizio Ravanelli, who had put Juventus ahead in the 12th minute, burst into tears. Gianluca Vialli preceded his move to Britain with a waving run in front of the Juventus end. Having surprisingly broken the Milan monopoly in Serie A last season, Juventus had now done what Milan also failed to do last year, beaten Ajax in the final of the Champions' Cup.

Moreover their victory came free of the awful events of that night in the Heysel stadium in 1985 when they first won the trophy. It gave Italy nine titles to England's eight, the last of the latter being in this same stadium in 1984 when Liverpool beat Roma, also 4-2 on penalties.

Ajax, the holders, were well beaten. Juventus created far more chances than the Dutch champions, unleashing 13 shots on goal to six. Ajax, disrupted by injuries and suspensions, were never able to find the speed and accuracy of passing to break free of Juventus's manacles.

Vialli was almost the villain of the night and could have spared much anxiety if, four minutes from the end of ordinary time, he had not put a glaring chance into the side netting after rounding the goalkeeper.

Juventus, starting with fervour, immediately found Ajax uncertain, perhaps missing the reassuring presence of the suspended Reiziger at the back. In the eighth minute Van der Sar failed to hold a 25-yard shot from Torricelli, allowing the fumble to fall to the feet of Ravanelli, who blasted the chance into the flower-bed behind the goal.

Four minutes later the goalkeeper boobed again and there was no reprieve. He came out for a ball that Frank de Boer was shepherding back for him, missed the kick and Ravanelli pounced down the right to slide the ball in from the most acute angle.

The goalkeeper's blushes were slightly reduced when his opposite number committed a comparable blunder five minutes before half-time. Frank de Boer's curling 20-yard free-kick came straight into the chest of Peruzzi, who mystifyingly tried to punch the ball away instead of catching it. Litmanen, the tournament's leading scorer, fought off Vierchowod and slotted home the rebound to put Ajax level.

Ajax's answer to the overall lack of pressure on Peruzzi's goal was to bring on their troubled young striker Kluivert after half-time. But chances were few, neither side wanting to make more mistakes by being too adventurous. The best chance fell to Juventus: Ravanelli this time beat Bogarde with the ball, cutting inside the defender to the righthand byline and crossing the ball back to Vialli, who mishit his close-range shot straight at the goalkeeper.

Before Vialli's worse miss Peruzzi again had Juventus supporters' hearts in their mouths when he elected to punch away a rare Ajax shot instead of catching it.

But Juventus also had the better of extra time. Silooy and Kanu both nearly deflected the ball into their own net, Van der Sar had to save Del Piero's 20-yarder, and with 20 seconds left Del Piero hit a 16-yard shot straight at the goalkeeper. One way or another the right side won.



Action men . . . Europe's finest battle it out for glory in Rome's Olympic Stadium last Wednesday PHOTOGRAPH: SHAUN BOTTERILL

Euro 96

Crackdown on soccer rowdies

Peter Hetherington

POLICE are planning a further crackdown on hundreds of soccer hooligans to prevent violence during the European football championships after a series of dawn raids in the North-east of England last week.

Twenty suspected ringleaders of a Newcastle group called the Gremlins were arrested after police burst into 25 houses in Tyneside and Durham. Nineteen people were charged with offences, including violent disorder.

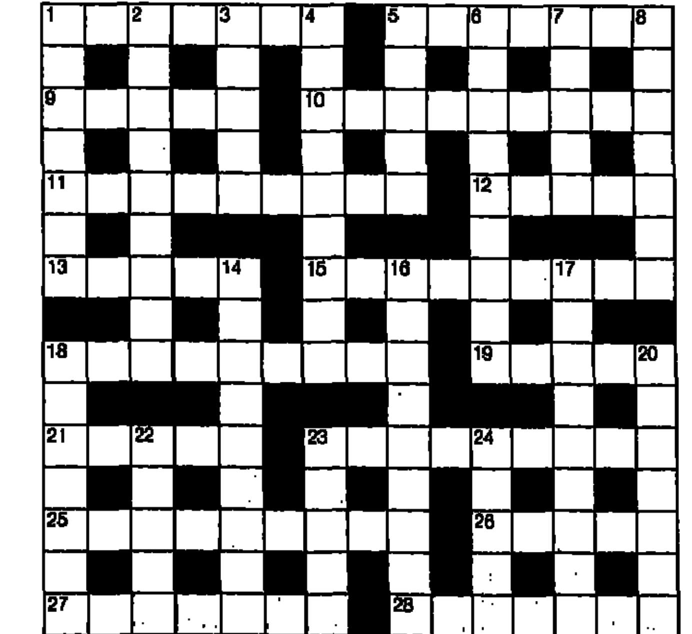
The police raids came after rioting last month when almost 1,000 fans rampaged through Newcastle after the last match of the season.

Officers seized racist and hooligan literature as well as a small arsenal of weapons. Northumbria police are also to release photographs of 200 other wanted men filmed on closed circuit television cameras.

Police said that they had gained valuable information on organised networks apparently bent on disrupting Euro 96, which begins next week and continues until the end of June.

Villa Park, Wembley, Old Trafford and Nottingham's City Ground have been highlighted as potential flashpoints.

Cryptic crossword by Crispa



Across

1 The person who thinks he's put on (7)
5 Record deposit (3,4)
9 The abstemious man imbibes little, so is sound as a bird (5)
10 Shopkeeper settling rent — mad as can be (9)
11 Cultivation? (9)
12 Not in any doubt about German capital flow (5)
13 The team accepting money may well go downhill fast! (5)
15 Refer to a page with audacious article in (9)
18 One taking a look around needs spectacles always (9)
19 Chide a little fellow if he's coldish (5)
21 A trainee preceding a member causes apprehension (5)
23 Give voice about prime suspect smirking (9)
25 Getting dressed (9)
26 Duck going to waste — fancy! (5)
27 English reader, a choosy individual (7)
28 Joints offering personal protection (7)

Down

1 A head holding exercise will ensure fitness (7)
2 Sheep and hares maybe on a heath (9)
3 Dull child, but game (5)
4 To restrict the drink makes good sense (9)
5 Left in the bag, which is careless (5)
6 Shedding tears about certain precious possessions (9)
7 The ear-shell some poor mermaid lost (5)
8 A girl filled with enthusiasm for cotton fabric (7)
14 Where food is provided ties men at work (9)
16 A limiting factor when father set about breaking mare (9)
17 An Australian, one with spirit, interrupting a bore (9)
18 Established way of procedure in the main (3-4)
20 Turn aside to poke about some craft (7)
22 Operative against cutting a rest (5)
23 Control the beast! (5)
24 The day before is about all right to call up (5)

Last week's solution

S	E	M	I	T	I	C		C	L	A	I	M	E	R
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R	U	S	T	L	E	R		E	L	E	A	N	O	R

Football International friendly: China 0 England 3

Barmby leads the cavalcade

David Lacey in Beijing

ENGLAND survived the shrillest of China syndromes without breakages in the Workers' Stadium last week and did as much as any team could have in the circumstances to put themselves into a positive frame of mind for the European Championship, now only a week away.

If it seemed a long way to come to prove that Barmby can still punish slack defences and Adams is happier in a back four than a back three, at least the team Terry Venables put out did its best to show him that the competition for places in his final squad of 22 is far from over.

Barmby scored twice and Gascoigne once, with Anderton heavily involved in each of the goals. In fact the match fast developed into a cavalcade of Spurs past and present, with Walker eventually replacing Flowers, whose nervous keeping did him no favours.

With Sheringham, the Spurs player most crucial to Venables's plans for Euro 96, rested along with Seaman, Pearce, Ince and Platt, the evening could have become little more than a check on England's spare parts. Two things prevented this: the high-quality performances of Gascoigne and Anderton, and the nature of the occasion.

Play China at Wembley with the stadium two-thirds empty and one would expect England to win with last week's ease. Meet them in Beijing, with 65,000 packing the ground and every other spectator seemingly equipped with a trumpet or a klaxon designed to perforate an eardrum at 10 paces, and the task is not so simple.

Refusing to become caught up in this attempt to re-enact the battle of the Imjin River, Venables's mixture of leading players, supporting players, spear-carriers and we'll-let-you-knows impressed as much through the composure of their football as through its ultimate effect.

Barmby, who did not score in his last 14 games for Middlesbrough, may have advanced his case for inclusion in the final squad by a couple of rungs. "His positional play was first-class," said Venables.

In the second match of their Far East tour, England defeated Hong Kong Golden Selection 1-0, the goal coming from a Les Ferdinand header just past the half-hour.

Meanwhile in Connecticut, Scotland went down 1-2 in their international friendly with the US in the Veterans' Stadium at Hartford.

Scotland took the lead after only nine minutes through Durie, only his fifth goal in 28 internationals. But the Americans equalised three minutes later from the penalty spot through Wynalda, and Jones got the winner for the home side with a spectacular 25-yard drive 18 minutes from the end.

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The Washington Post Le Monde

Israelis entrust their future to a hawk

Derek Brown in Jerusalem and Martin Walker in Washington

BINYAMIN Netanyahu, derided and dismissed as a lightweight for much of his short political career, staged the biggest political upset in Israel's 48-year history last week by snatching the prime ministership from the veteran statesman and Nobel peace laureate, Shimon Peres.

The results from last week's national vote have profound implications for the Middle East peace process, and for Israel's fragile land-for-peace deal with the Palestinians, bitterly criticised by Mr Netanyahu.

The Likud leader was finally declared the winner by a margin of less than 1 per cent in the country's first direct election for prime minister. He took 50.4 per cent of the vote, against 49.5 per cent for Mr Peres. At 46, Mr Netanyahu will be Israel's youngest leader.

The final tally of parliamentary votes gives Labour, still led by Mr Peres, just 34 seats. Likud has been reduced to 32, of which 10 have gone to Mr Netanyahu's electoral allies, Tzomet and Gesher. The third biggest party is the mainly Sephardic (oriental Jewish) Shas, with 10 seats.

Mr Netanyahu will have little difficulty finding the 65 or so members he needs to consolidate his grip. But the price could be high, with the smaller parties demanding their share of posts.

Mr Peres, aged 72, who has fought five general elections and lost them all, maintained a brave front. He telephoned his vanquisher to congratulate him and said he would continue to campaign for peace. "We shall support the peace process . . . we shall oppose any attempt to stop it," he said.

On Sunday, Likud leaders began negotiations with potential allies in the Knesset (parliament), which is expected to meet on June 17. That is when Mr Netanyahu hopes to present his new government.

The three religious parties, which have between them 24 Knesset members, are essential to Mr Netanyahu's hopes of a solid majority in the Knesset. But they will demand at least four ministries.

And even with the religious parties on board, Mr Netanyahu will also have to entice into his government at least two smaller centrist parties. His most acute problem is that by law he is allowed a maximum of 18 cabinet members.

His first test came on Monday when Israeli troops fought stone-throwing Palestinians in Hebron, sparking fears of another eruption of violence in the West Bank city. Tension has risen sharply in Hebron since last week's election.

Mr Netanyahu said during the campaign that he would not stand by the present Labour government's commitment to withdraw most Israeli occupation troops from Hebron by the middle of this month. Palestinian leaders have warned that if the troops stay, there could be a renewed outbreak of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising of the late 1980s.

The incident will increase pressure on the Likud leader to stand by the withdrawal agreement, which will leave Israeli forces in Hebron to protect the 400 or so Jewish settlers living among more than 100,000 Palestinians. Israel's closest ally, the United States, has signalled that it too wants the new government to comply with the pullout agreement.

Mr Netanyahu vowed on Sunday night to be the leader of Jews and non-Jews alike, and to continue to seek "peace with security" with the Palestinians and his country's other Arab neighbours. In a victory speech laden with reconciliatory rhetoric, but without any specific policy pledges, he said he would work to strengthen Israel's peace deals with Egypt and Jordan and continue negotiations with the Palestinians. "We will also work to further peace deals and coexistence with other Arab states. I call on them also to join the circle of peace," he said.

Mr Peres insisted that the new government must honour Israel's peace deals with Mr Arafat even if it opposed an independent Palestinian state. "Our nation must respect the agreements that we have achieved, even if we don't like the dreams that our partners may have," he said.

Arab and Western governments reacted warily to the Likud victory, hoping publicly that Mr Netanyahu will continue the peace process, and worrying privately that he will slow it down or destroy it.

"Our policy will remain the same," President Clinton said. "The United States will continue its support for the people of Israel . . . and for the process of peace."

Likud supporters celebrate as Netanyahu edges ahead of Peres in the election PHOTOGRAPH: MENAHEM KAHANA

Martin Woollacott, page 12
Bibi's siren call, page 22

IRA dashes hopes of new ceasefire

Ian Graham and Patrick Wintour

HOPES of a new IRA ceasefire vanished this week when it issued a brief statement saying there was "absolutely no likelihood" of such a move before all-party talks on Ulster's future start on June 10.

There had been hopes after Sinn Fein's best election result last week that the republican movement might be prepared to give the democratic path a try. But with no ceasefire there will be no Sinn Fein admission to the talks unless there is a complete about-face by the Irish and UK governments — a move which would so outrage unionist parties that they would be certain to stay away.

Tuesday's statement, issued to the BBC and the Belfast Irish News, was seen as a clear attempt to influence the meeting in London between Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern ireland Secretary, and Dick Spring, the Irish foreign minister, on the issue of decommissioning paramilitary weapons, which the IRA fears will dominate discussions.

To try to calm such fears, the British and Irish governments are expected to announce this week that Sinn Fein will be allowed to take part in the talks for three months before any handover of paramilitary weapons. The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, is said to have accepted the plan.

Senator George Mitchell, the special adviser to President Clinton, will be given an important role in chairing the talks on decommissioning and in the main political strand of talks on the future of North-South relations in Ireland.

Sinn Fein triumph, page 8
Comment, page 12

Race for riches divides China 4

US cities opt for teen curfews 4

The gold diggers of Britain plc 19

A Darwinian experiment in death 23

Booze gets bad name in US 24

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Arafat gives vintage performance at Oxford

Ian Black

IT WAS a splendid if unlikely setting, but Yasser Arafat loved every minute at the Oxford Union on Monday night, defiantly stating his people's case — despite a new Israeli government that looks distinctly less keen on the "peace of the brave" he kept talking about.

He came into the chamber like a prizefighter, saluting the applause from students pressed against the stained glass windows and the wooden balconies — a bigger crowd-puller than O J Simpson, the last high-profile speaker, and certainly more popular.

"Mr Palestine" was in his trademark gear — beautifully-tailored olive drab, five-day stubble and chequered keffiyeh headdress — but he had left behind his pistol and holster. The only guns were in the discreet hands of the Special Branch men swarming over the building.

Close up, President Arafat looked tired, his hawkish eyes more hooded than usual, though he pumped hands and spoke excitedly of his "fruitful, warm and constructive" talks with John Major earlier in the day.

The speech, after the port, was an Arafat classic; an hour-long excursion through Palestinian history in elegant, classical Arabic with simultaneous translation and occasional lapses into English for wisecracks.

Politically, he was cautious, but gave no ground in his first speech since the bad news from Israel, insisting that agreements must be honoured and the world should make sure they were.

"We entirely respect the right of the Israelis to choose their representative in the democratic way," he said in a key passage. "We see these elections as a choice of who will represent Israel in completing this journey.

"Peace agreements are a contractual transaction . . . with no change of mind and no unilateral withdrawal."

But there was no doubt about the president's demands. "It is no more than naive self-delusion to claim that Israel is capable of achieving peace without a full withdrawal from Palestinian and Arab territory and without recognising the right of the Palestinians to return, to self-determination, and to establish an independent state with its capital in Jerusalem."

It was vintage Arafat, at once folksy, almost mawkishly dramatic, but deadly serious too.

Who do you think you are kidding, Mr Major?

YOUR leader on the beef crisis (An election in July, by jingo?, June 2) came as a welcome antidote to the anti-Europe hysteria being whipped up by the UK government. BSE has not been eradicated from the British beef herd, and government controls have, thus far, not prevented some infected material from entering the food chain. Therefore, how can the Government continue to assert the safety of British beef?

The limited cull that Douglas Hogg has offered Europe has nothing to do with eradicating BSE from the herds, and our European partners are quite right to be sceptical.

The Government has taken an unacceptable gamble with British lives. Until BSE has been completely removed from the food chain, or until it is proved that BSE does not cause spongiform encephalopathy in humans, it is reasonable to expect foreign governments to protect their people.
(Dr) D K Hardman,
School of Social Sciences,
City University, London

LISTENING to the Prime Minister outline the Government's latest tactics over the ban on British beef, one could visualise Mr Major standing at the despatch box in short trousers, with his school chums bellowing encouragement. Just isn't cricket, is it?

An incident of this nature would have seen Palmerston dispatch a gun boat. Churchill would have vowed to "fight them on the beaches". Mr Major, however, has decided to take his bat and ball home.
Peter Robinson,
Morecambe, Lancashire

JOHN MAJOR'S attempt to "Falklandise" the political relationship with Europe probably looked like a good idea in isolation, but I presume that the Government forgot the proximity of the forthcoming invasion of football fans? In one stroke it has created an extremely dangerous situation. Mr Major's election-slogan list can now add, "Come on over if you think you're hard enough".
Brain Austin,
Weston-super-Mare, Somserset

IMMEDIATELY consumer choice looks like it might upset a farmer or industrialist, the Government appears to lose its enthusiasm for the rigours of the market-place. The BSE fiasco showed that consumers place a significant penalty on food that may contain agents with a plausible, if not entirely proven, risk of harming them. Over time, producers will respond to these consumer preferences. However, if market signals are obscured because producers think the Government will bail them out with compensation (BSE) or conceal their problem (baby-milk), we should not be surprised if the food industry continues to take liberties with the nation's health.
Clive Bates,
London

MAJOR'S posturing is as morally justified as Britain's position in the opium wars. It is typical of the UK government's understanding of commerce that it is content to encourage the supply of cheap and defective products, and then wants to force the world to buy them.
Brian Hall,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex

THE best way to retaliate against the Euro beef ban is to stop Germany, France, Italy, Holland etc from competing in the Euro 96 football championship. This would have the added bonus of marginally improving England's prospects.
William Barrett,
London

History and the Holocaust

I CAN'T help but find it extremely ironic that French cleric Abbé Pierre (Dramatic fall from grace for French "saint", May 12), who took great risks smuggling Jews out of Nazi-occupied France and who has devoted his life to helping the poor and homeless, is now being ostracized for defending Roger Garaudy's right to historical inquiry into the extent of the Holocaust. I guess actions don't speak louder than words. It seems that some years ago Noam Chomsky was excoriated for exactly the same heresy.

This leads to an interesting question: is the Holocaust a historical event and therefore subject to open and honest debate and disagreement, or is it an article of religious dogma with any departure from the received orthodoxy resulting in the offender being ostracised by the community of the righteous?

Last year, professional historians at the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States, were censored when they planned an exhibition on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that showed them as atrocities rather than as a necessary and glorious end to the "Good War". Funding for the museum and individual jobs were threatened amid cries of "unpatriotic", "anti-American", and even "treasonous". Buried in all the hype was considerable evidence that the bombings didn't end the war and may have, in fact, prolonged it.

Since Mr Garaudy's book is entitled the Founding Myths Of Israeli Politics, I would surmise that what is possibly being suppressed this time probably has less to do with the Holocaust than with some of the less savoury aspects of Israel's birth. I would further speculate that recent Israeli outrages in southern Lebanon greatly amplify the need to bolt the closet door lest any skeletons escape.

Knee-jerk emotional reactions whenever anyone challenges the "official" version of the Holocaust or other sacrosanct historical events accomplish nothing except to provide fodder for those who wish to deny it. Why not answer them with facts?
Efraim Csuwoj,
Coram, New York, USA

Making a mess of Hong Kong

I WOULD like the British to know that we in Hong Kong are suffering as the victims of petty-minded party politics steeped in the tradition of nationalist prejudices. It must be well-known that John Major rewarded the governor, Chris Patten, for his part in the 1992 British elections, knowing that Patten's only qualification for the post was his loyalty to the Prime Minister.

The British people must be aware of the tactics Mr Patten used in that election, and they should not be surprised that the same smart propaganda machine has swamped the British press with stories of this brave man's stand for democracy against the Chinese government that had leaned over backwards to bring about a smooth transition from British to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

Mr Patten has a small but vocal band of followers in Hong Kong who, like the British government, only discovered the dire need of Hong Kong for democracy when Beijing had made it clear that sovereignty would revert to China. Until that time there had never been a "parliamentary" election in Hong Kong, and for 150 years proponents of democracy were quickly denigrated and suppressed. The only human rights in Hong Kong were brought about by social pressures, always under threat, and its prosperity was achieved by hard work.

What was intended to be a smooth transition, with every hope that the "one country two systems" plan would work because the contrary would do no good for either side, has now become a vulgar slanging match, with the governor calling the first shots that provoke not only China but also those who have worked hard to make the progress achieved under the governorships of Lord Maclehose and his two successors, Sir Edward Youde and Lord Wilson.

Most devastating is the fact that the two other main political parties have acquiesced in actions which, had they occurred in Britain, they would have most strenuously opposed. Very few Members of Parliament have taken the trouble to understand the situation, and most of those who have done so would almost certainly agree with what I am saying (some having already informed me of this).
Elsie Tu,
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Central flaw in Howard's way

THE central error in Michael Howard's reasoning (Judges lambast minister, June 2) has not yet, it seems, been adequately exposed. Speaking to the 1993 Conservative party conference, Michael Howard said: "Let us be clear. Prison works. It ensures that we are protected from murderers, muggers and rapists, and it makes many who are tempted to commit crime think twice."

A welter of evidence contradicts this rhetoric. Most crime is property-related (93 per cent) and nothing to do with murder and rape. Most murders are crimes of passion or wrongs committed by people suffering from clinically diagnosable mental conditions — not people who would be suddenly sobered into not killing by the threat of a prison sentence. Over 60 per cent of imprisonments are for property-related offences.

The prison population is now 55,000 and projected by the Home Office to rise to 59,900 by 2004. A massive expansion of the prison building programme since 1982, and the incarceration of an extra 10,000 since 1993, should, according to Mr Howard's logic, have cast a deterent shadow over large sections of the community and thus reduced crime. In fact, recorded crime has doubled since 1980.
(Dr) Gary Slapper,
Law School, Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent

Briefly

YOU report that the Labour leader, Tony Blair, and a cross-party committee of MPs feel that the military's ban on gays and lesbians in its ranks cannot be "imposed on the armed forces against their will" (MPs vote to keep forces ban on gays, May 19). Mr Blair's ready abandonment of the view he holds in "principle", that the ban ought to be lifted, is bad enough. However, your story misses the point. Since when, in a parliamentary democracy, are policy decisions made on the basis of what the military might find acceptable? Don't the constitutional problems here over-shadow the human rights concerns? It would seem preferable to me that the generals answer to the Government and Parliament, however bigoted they may be, rather than the situation you depict where cringing parliamentarians vote on the basis of the military's possible reaction.
Sean Dewart,
Toronto, Canada

CONCERNING your Geneva report (Call for land-mines ban ignored, May 12) estimating that 100 million land mines presently await their victims in 68 countries, I wonder if, to rectify our criminal international status quo, an equivalent number ought not to be laid throughout the mine-producing nations? Let's have a level playing field.
R V Macleod,
Sirdar, BC, Canada

JUSTICE for the unrepresented voters in the Westminster City Council area was like a slow train coming. But when it came, it was worth waiting for, every £31 million of it.
James Bidgood,
Mackay, Queensland, Australia

I APPLAUD Australian prime minister John Howard's decision to outlaw automatic and semi-automatic rifles, and would like to see John Major take a similar initiative. How can we refuse to let atrocities such as the mass shootings in Dunblane and Tasmania affect our attitude to firearms? I cannot understand why such measures have never been seriously considered in the US.
Martha Stokes,
Hong Kong

LIKE many Britons I was saddened by the ideological and damaging sale of Railtrack (Railtrack set to yield £1.9 billion, May 26); an essential national transport asset. Imagine the reaction to the UK government selling motorways and arterial roads in similar cavalier fashion!
Wayne Burtt,
Surrey Hills, Victoria, Australia

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Yeltsin unveils poll manifesto

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin has unveiled an election manifesto almost indistinguishable from that of his Communist opponents. He promises Russians a normal life, fatter wallets, and the protection of their vital interests.

He chose the industrial city of Perm in the Urals to set out his political stall and received a mixed reception from the elderly crowd, who wanted to know when this normal life would start.

His 127-page programme said: "I feel your pain, the pain of the country. But this is the pain of a recovering organism."

Many in Perm did not think so; banners were as often anti-Yeltsin as pro-Yeltsin. The president promised to listen to their concerns and told the crowd: "In the last years, we began to forget what empty shelves are. We should ensure that people forget about empty wallets."

His programme was vague on how this new spending power could be achieved. Like the Communist manifesto, it was optimistic about prospects for economic growth. Mr Yeltsin promised to support the national producer, to cut taxes, and to ban the system of tax favours for groups such as those run by his favourite sportsmen.

He promised to clamp down on the uncontrolled sale of land to speculators, to contain unemployment, and to restore the value of savings destroyed by the liberalisation of prices.

The manifesto will have little political impact, launched only days after the Communists', which adhered to the same principles. The main triumph of last week for the Russian leader was getting the rebel Chechen leader, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, to Moscow to sign a ceasefire deal, and then keeping Mr Yandarbiyev there while himself flying to Grozny to proclaim he had won the war. However, the peace deal is in serious trouble after a weekend of fighting, deaths and accusations of bad faith from both sides.

As opinion polls continued to record a rise in Mr Yeltsin's personal rating, the president suggested for the first time that he might win outright in the first round of voting between the 11 candidates, which takes place on June 16.

The programme contained no surprises on foreign policy or Chechenia, which Mr Yeltsin pledged would stay within the federation. He remains committed to his relationship with the United States and Europe, following Russia's accession to the Council of Europe.

On defence, he promised to maintain a stronger nuclear deterrent, and to support the military industrial complex, which became the first victim of his reform programme.

"The path which Russia is following is the right one and the only possible one. Only this can lead us to our cherished goal of renaissance of a great state," he said.

In style and tone, particularly his use of the term "great state", Mr Yeltsin was borrowing from the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, his main rival. But Mr Zyuganov continues to suffer from poor publicity and little television exposure.

The Communist leader's main weapon in the run-up to polling will be his claim that the vote will be falsified by officials, who are beholden to the president's administration. Mr Zyuganov has urged supporters to flood polling stations to ensure ballot boxes are empty before voting starts and are sealed.

Voters trim sails of Czech PM

Ian Traynor in Prague

THE CZECH prime minister, Vaclav Klaus, launched a battle for his political life this week, vowing to hold on to power after weekend elections stripped him of his majority in parliament.

In an interview with the pro-government Telegraf newspaper, Mr Klaus suggested a minority regrouping of his coalition, the last conservative government in eastern Europe, was probably the only option left for the country. "I don't see a lot of further possibilities . . . We must begin to work intensively on this," he said.

Official results gave Mr Klaus's coalition only 99 seats in the new 200-member parliament, down from 112. The rival Social Democrats surprised analysts by winning 61 seats.

Mr Klaus said no mainstream parties would want to deal with the little-reformed communists or the far-right Republicans, which together won 40 seats.

The outcome of the Czech Republic's first general election since the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1993 heralds a period of uncertainty, sullying the country's image as a haven of stability in post-communist Europe. The result could signal parliamentary gridlock and bring forward fresh elections.

President Vaclav Havel has had talks with Mr Klaus and is expected to ask the prime minister to try to form a government.

However, the leader of the Social Democrats, Milos Zeman, could fairly claim to be the psychological victor, since his party virtually quadrupled its seats to 61.

Unlike elsewhere in the region, the Czech Social Democrats are not reformed communists. The rump unreformed communists came in third with more than 10 per cent of the vote. The Republicans took 8 per cent of the vote and gained four seats.

Close encounters . . . Vaclav Klaus, the Czech prime minister, signs the arms of schoolchildren in Ostrava last week PHOTOGRAPH: PETR JOSEK

French praise structure of reformed Nato

Denis Staunton in Berlin

NATO foreign ministers this week agreed to a new command structure which theoretically enables European alliance members to mount military operations independently of the United States.

The plan, announced at a conference in Berlin, allows for the creation of combined joint task forces (CJTFs) to be deployed in troubled regions, such as former Yugoslavia, under the command of the Western European Union (WEU).

The French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, welcomed the reform as a great success for Europe and announced that France would soon resume the full role in Nato it abandoned 30 years ago.

"If this process is completed, France regards with interest this new alliance and declares itself ready to participate fully according to a new status," he said.

The announcement was preceded by heated wrangling over the role of the US in any European-led operations.

The US state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, admitted that the wording of the agreement had caused problems. He insisted, however, that Washington would retain the right to become involved in planning any new operations. "We are also a European country and a European power and we are determined to remain here," he said.

The foreign ministers also discussed the I-For peacekeeping operation in Bosnia, insisting that it would end as planned at the end of this year.

"There will be no post I-For," said the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel. "We went in together and we'll come out together."

But Nato's secretary-general, Javier Solana, said the peacekeeping troops would remain at full strength until after the elections planned for September, leaving open the possibility of extending their mandate.

Speaking in Paris to the assembly of the WEU, Michael Portillo, the British defence secretary, made a pointed call to the US not to leave Bosnia at the end of the year.

US insists on Bosnia holding elections

Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva and Julian Borger in Pale

UNDER heavy pressure from the United States, Balkan leaders agreed on Sunday to try to create the necessary conditions for free and fair Bosnian elections by the middle of September.

The US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said that delaying the vote would "only serve to entrench the status quo and deepen the divisions" in the war-racked country.

After bilateral talks with Mr Christopher in Geneva, the presidents of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia pledged to work to ensure freedom of movement throughout Bosnia and provide open access to the news media during the election campaign.

But the US failed to win assurances from Serbia's president, Slobodan Milosevic, that the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, would be removed from office to ensure a free election. Mr Christopher warned that sanctions could be reimposed on Belgrade if action was not taken. "I'm not in the business of deadlines but there is a growing impatience on the part of the international community," he said.

He said the Nato-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia would step up its patrols, increasing the chances of troops apprehending those indicted as war criminals by the United Nations tribunal in The Hague. Mr Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb army leader, General Ratko Mladic, are both wanted by the tribunal.

Mr Christopher also announced that a US aid office would open in Banja Luka — a clear gesture of support for more moderate elements among the Bosnian Serbs, away from Mr Karadzic's stronghold of Pale.

● The Hague war crimes tribunal took a dramatic leap forward last week as a weeping soldier in the Bosnian Serb army, Drazen Erdemovic, pleaded guilty to taking part in Europe's worst massacre since the second world war, at Srebrenica in July last year.

The Week

H D DEVE GOWDA was sworn in as India's new prime minister. He heads the 13-party leftwing United Front. The previous prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, a Hindu nationalist, resigned after failing to command a majority in parliament.

TURKISH authorities will have to improve their record on human rights, democracy and Cyprus before the European Parliament approves Ankara's share of $4.5 billion in aid for 12 countries, Pauline Green, leader of the socialist bloc in the parliament, said after a fact-finding mission to the country.

BURMA'S military regime freed at least 74 of the 262 people detained in a failed attempt by the junta to stop the pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, from holding a party congress.

AFTER years of detention in Hong Kong camps, 214 Vietnamese voluntarily boarded a plane home, bringing the number of asylum-seekers returned in May to 1,391 — the highest monthly total in 30 months.

VENEZUELA'S supreme court found the former president, Carlos Andrés Pérez, aged 73, guilty of corruption and sentenced him to two years and four months house arrest.

THE Gulf state of Bahrain announced it had foiled a pro-Iranian plot to overthrow the government and was recalling its ambassador to Tehran.

SAUDI ARABIA announced that it had publicly executed four men convicted of the bombing last year of a UN-run military facility in Riyadh, which left seven dead, including five Americans.

TURKISH troops in Cyprus shot dead a Greek Cypriot soldier in the UN buffer zone on the so-called Green Line which divides the capital, Nicosia.

THE Angolan president, José Eduardo dos Santos, fired the prime minister, Marcolino Moco, and his cabinet and suspended foreign exchange trade in decrees aimed at dealing with the economic crisis.

MORE than 10,000 delegates met in Istanbul for a two-week UN conference seeking to address deep-set urban ills — poverty, homelessness, social and environmental decay — and build global cities for the future.

TIMOTHY LEARY, the US psychologist and philosopher best-known for advising his students to "turn on, tune in, and drop out" during the 1960s, has died of cancer aged 75.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
June 9 1996

Crime-hit US cities seek to banish children from their streets

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

A NEW JERSEY city plagued by crime has taken the dramatic step of reinforcing its night-time curfew on all children under 18 with a daytime ban as well — leaving them free to be outside for just 10 hours a day.

Faced with drug trafficking and gang violence by night and school truancy by day, the authorities in Camden, New Jersey will now bar all children between the ages of five and 18 from the streets from 8.30am until 3pm — adding to the ban already in force between 10pm and 6am. Parents of those caught will face a fine of $1,000 or up to 90 days in jail.

The drastic action was announced the day after President Clinton's call to combat youth violence with night-time curfews, which alarmed civil liberties groups and child rights advocates who fear it could lead to a virtual ban on all under-18s from America's streets.

The president's support for so-called "teen curfews" — already in force in three-quarters of the US's largest 200 cities — has touched off a hotly contested debate, with critics charging that much celebrated gains have been exaggerated and real costs ignored.

Cities from Washington DC to Denver have introduced laws banning children from staying out after dark, with most authorities imposing heavy fines for each violation.

A curfew scheme in New Orleans drew particular praise from Mr Clinton. Since 1994, the city has required all under-17s to be off the streets by 8pm on a winter school night, 9pm in summer. At the weekend, teenagers not indoors by 11pm are taken to a "central curfew centre", where their parents must go to pick them up. The family must then undergo counselling. The night-time youth crime rate in New Orleans has fallen by 27 per cent.

"These are just like the old-fashioned rules most of us had when we were kids," Mr Clinton told a conference of church leaders in Louisiana. Recalling the words of his late mother, he said: "When the lights come on, be home, Bill."



Thousands march in Washington at the weekend to demand a better deal for children PHOTO: DENIS PAQUIN

With thousands of parents and families gathered in Washington at the weekend for a rally to protest against Republican cuts in services for children, the president's remarks renewed an often bitter debate about US youth and their involvement in crime.

Advocates brandish statistics showing considerable declines in rates of crime and violence where curfews are in force. As violent crime among teens rose 57 per cent between 1984 and 1994 a pro-curfew consensus has evolved among US mayors.

"They help keep our children out of harm's way," said Mr Clinton, who is using the issue to highlight his tough-love approach to crime in this year's presidential election campaign.

Ruth Sidel, a sociologist, fears curfews discriminate against poor children because they rarely have parents able to chauffeur them around and keep them off the streets. "Upper middle class teenagers will always have mummy or daddy to drive them to band practice," she said.

But the harshest criticism has come from the American Civil Liberties Union. "What these laws do is penalise normal and otherwise lawful behaviour, for example standing on the street corner, and penalise the many for the misdeeds of the few," said activist Norman Siegel.

Comment, page 12

Albania accused of poll 'abuse'

Helena Smith in Tirana

THE EUROPEAN UNION is ready to abandon plans for closer links with Albania if reports of the rigging of the first round of the country's general election last month are confirmed by international observers.

The ruling Democratic Party, which claimed victory in the earlier polls, won another victory in the second round, taking six of nine seats in a poll boycotted by most opposition parties and criticised by Western observers.

The opposition demanded a rerun of polling in more than two-thirds of the country, saying the election had been rigged. President Sali Berisha has denied any manipulation.

The main opposition parties said they would hold a protest in Tirana's Skanderbeg Square on Tuesday, one week after their first demonstration was crushed by riot police.

The Albanian president was conspicuous by his absence at the weekend as voters took part in run-off polls that marked the end of a general election. Despite seeing his Democratic Party win an overwhelming, if disputed, victory in the first round, allegations of huge vote-rigging have "visibly shaken" the president, reports said.

Opposition party supporters have accused Dr Berisha, aged 51, of plotting the return of one-party rule in the former Stalinist state.

Race for riches threatens to split China

Andrew Higgins in Beijing

AT THE Success Club, a pleasure dome of marble, polished wood, and plaster nymphs run by paramilitary police, the winners and losers of China's chaotic dash for prosperity collide on massage tables.

The People's Armed Police previously used the premises, just down the road from the Beijing Worker's Stadium, to show Communist Party propaganda films. Now the force uses the building to make money from brief but profitable encounters between the ever-widening poles of China's economic boom.

The race for prosperity is a frenzied but increasingly uneven competition that, according to a prominent Chinese economist, could push the country towards Yugoslav-style disintegration.

On one side are the new rich of the Chinese capital, men with shiny suits and mobile phones. On the other are the have-nots from impoverished hinterlands, among them refugees such as Miss Li, a young textile worker turned masseuse who came to Beijing after losing her job at a bankrupt state factory in Anhui province.

According to Hu Angang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the gulf between rich and poor threatens China's ability to hold together and avoid disintegration into an anarchic jumble of feuding fiefdoms.

"The biggest and most important task today is to avoid China splitting apart," said Mr Hu, an outspoken critic of the trickle-down theory championed by Deng Xiaoping as an antidote to the stagnation left by Maoist egalitarianism.

While coastal provinces, blessed by Beijing with tax breaks and flush with cash from Hong Kong and Taiwan, have raced ahead with double-digit annual growth, poorer regions are lagging far behind. The per capita gross domestic product of China's richest region, the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone, is now 86 times higher than that in the poorest area, Qinglong county in Guizhou.

"Former Yugoslavia is a very good example of what can happen if regional gaps become too large and central government loses too much power," said Mr Hu. "On the surface, the war there was not about economics but an ethnic conflict. The root cause, though, was economic."

When Mr Deng's reforms began in 1978, Anhui province had a per capita GDP only slightly less than coastal Fujian. Today, both are far better off. But they have also grown far apart; Fujian's per capita figure is more than twice that of Anhui.

This widening gap, believe Mr Hu and like-minded advocates of strong central government, stokes separatist sentiments among both rich and poor. Just as Slovenia and Croatia, the richest parts of former Yugoslavia, were the first to bolt, prosperous Chinese coastal regions could, they say, succumb to the same temptation.

In inland areas, the poorest of which have large non-Chinese populations, economic grievances fuel resentment against Beijing and inflame ethnic tension.

Tibet, where Beijing was last week reported to have issued an ultimatum to "splittists" to surrender and repent, comes 131st in the United Nations table of general development — an index combining life expectancy, literacy and other measures of well-being. Shanghai and Beijing are ranked 31st, ahead of South Korea and Singapore.

"China is a vast country and the centre must have the money and authority to redress the balance," said Mr Hu. "No matter who is in charge, the central government cannot let provinces drift away. I want to change the rules of the game between the centre and provinces."

Instead of being silenced as an alarmist heretic, Mr Hu appears to have the ear of the Chinese leadership, which looks favourably on a coterie of neo-conservative scholars who see danger in China's fast-buck boom. But he has enraged coastal barons with demands that Beijing scrap privileges granted to special economic zones by Mr Deng, now aged 91 and largely eclipsed as a political force.

Li Youwei, party chief in Shenzhen, which is a neighbour of Hong Kong, accuses him of trying to revive the ruinous egalitarian frenzy of Mao's Great Leap Forward and reverse Mr Deng's policies.

"Deng's road was correct but the situation has changed," replied Mr Hu. "We can't say a single word from Deng is worth 10,000 words by anyone else."

The economist has the backing of powerful patrons. His views mesh with the arguments of Zhu Rongji, a politburo member in charge of the economy who has struggled to halt rapid decentralisation produced by Mr Deng's free-market frenzy.

Other supporters include the leaders of poor provinces such as Anhui. The province's governor phoned last week to invite Mr Hu to address local cadres.

The New China News Agency, which produces secret daily reports for "internal reference", included a paper written by Mr Hu on the parallels with Yugoslavia in one of its submissions to the Communist Party leadership — the modern version of imperial-era memorials to the throne.

Evidence of the state's dangerous weakness, according to Mr Hu, can be seen in the steady erosion of central government revenue. "If the central government wants to increase its authority, it must first increase its money," he said.

Beijing's revenues accounted for 9.5 per cent of GDP in 1986 but have since dropped to 3.5 per cent — less than the 5.6 per cent received by Belgrade on the eve of Yugoslavia's civil war.

The emergence of enterprises like the Success Club illustrates the risks behind such statistics.

"The money secured by the central government cannot even support our army," warned Mr Hu. "This forces soldiers to go into business to make their own money. No army in the world should be allowed to do business. Money must come from the government. If it doesn't, corruption in the army will grow worse and worse."

● Chinese authorities have expanded a crackdown on separatists and illegal religious activities to include schools and colleges in the mainly Muslim north-west region of Xinjiang.

Nigeria heads sleaze ranking

NIGERIA tops the list of countries that international business people consider the most corrupt, according to a ranking published this week by a Berlin-based independent organisation, Transparency International.

Fifty-four countries involved in international business are ranked by Transparency International in its second annual corruption index. The rankings are based on results from 10 surveys made by management and risk-analysis organisations as well as on information volunteered by representatives of international companies through the Internet.

After Nigeria, business people ranked Pakistan, Kenya, Bangladesh, China, Cameroon, Venezuela, Russia, India and Indonesia as the most corrupt countries.

The 10 least corrupt countries this year were New Zealand, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Canada, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Australia. The United States was judged the 15th least corrupt country, with a slightly worse reputation than Israel but better than Austria.

The findings, stored and analysed at Goettingen University in Germany, report perceptions of people in international business, mostly from industrialised nations, who deal regularly with foreign companies and governments. — *New York Times*

Events conspire to unsettle a president



The US this week

Martin Walker

IT IS an open question whether the defeat of his candidate in the Israeli elections or the guilty verdict in the trial of his Whitewater partners last week did serious damage to President Clinton. His diplomatic reputation will not be helped in the Middle East and elsewhere by the perception that in backing the Labour prime minister, Shimon Peres, he picked a loser.

The Whitewater mess, which seemed to be trickling down the drain of American forgetfulness, has suddenly backed up and come whooshing out to soak the White House all over again, dismaying his friends and giving his enemies new heart. The Democrats can no longer indulgently call it all "a cover-up without a crime" — a crime has now been certified by a jury. It is now clear that the president's old business associates in the Whitewater venture were crooks. The morale of dispirited Republicans has been restored. The House and Senate committee inquiries have gained new momentum.

In each case, the damage so far has been more potential than real, and the outcome will be determined by others. Whether Arab extremists express their rage or the new Likud government pursues or blocks the Middle East peace process, they are unlikely to ask the White House first. Indeed, when the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, insisted last week that the US and Israel enjoy "a special relationship", one realised how cool relations have become. (Politicians say that only when things are grim: ask John Major.) Clinton's hopes of a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement being signed on his front lawn this autumn are, therefore, looking even slimmer than they were.

Insisting that US policy towards Israel "will remain the same", Clinton backtracked fast from his partisan support for Peres in order to reach out to his replacement. "The first big leg of the whole process of peace in the Middle East was completed by one of Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud predecessors," Clinton told reporters as the last votes were being counted.

The president dismissed suggestions that the new Israeli leader might derail the US diplomatic efforts in the region, or that Netanyahu was not prepared to keep up the drive for peace. "I was quite interested in the comments he made about this, particularly in the last days of the election," Clinton noted.

American support for Israel, for the democratic process and for the pursuit of peace in the Middle East will continue, Clinton went on, pointedly listing them in that order of priority. "If Israel is prepared to take risks for peace, we are determined to do our best to reduce the risks and increase the security of those who do that," he said.

Beyond the immediate reaction, the main concern of US policy is to keep moderate Arab states from edging back from the steady process of normalising relations with Israel. In particular, the US is determined to nurture what it sees as its most important strategic achievement in the region, the emergent grouping of Israel, Jordan and Turkey.

General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff at the Pentagon, arrived in Jordan as the Israeli votes were being counted. He was there to discuss further US military support for the kingdom, a reward for the Israel-Jordan peace treaty. He also visited the Jordanian air base where 34 US fighters have been stationed since April, to enforce the "no fly" zone over Iraq. The US is also training Jordanian pilots, who will next year receive their first batch of new US F-16 fighters, a symbol of the transformation of US-Jordanian relations since Jordan refused to join the coalition against Iraq during the Gulf war five years ago.

In short, although Israel remains the cornerstone of US strategy in the Middle East, it is increasingly within a wider regional context. The US is friends with most of the Middle Eastern players, and has shown Libya and Iraq that it has the capacity to make the neighbourhood unfriendly and unpleasant for America's enemies. Before the election, there had been a plan to put pressure on Syria, using the new US-sponsored friendship between Israel and Turkey to remind President Assad how completely surrounded he is.

That may now take more time, and Jordan and Turkey, along with Arab moderates, will have to see what kind of *modus vivendi* can be established with the fiery Netanyahu.

From the US perspective, it is important to note that any damage done to Clinton by the Israeli elections may not benefit the Republicans. The nastiest recent period of US-Israeli relations was between the last Likud governments and the Bush administration, which blocked the use of American funds as loan guarantees for new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. It was James Baker, White House chief of staff to President Reagan and secretary of state to President Bush, who was widely reported to have dismissed the importance of the Jewish lobby with the blunt phrase, "Fuck the Jews. They don't vote for us anyway." At different times, Baker denied saying it, said he had been misquoted, and quoted out of context, and quite possibly all at once. Few in Tel Aviv believed him.

It was in those tricky years of the 1980s that Netanyahu was in the US as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. He knows the Jewish community of New York well, and knows first-hand from them the degree to which the candidate Bill Clinton won back their support to the Democrats. And despite the bitter divisions between the pro-Likud and pro-Labour wings of a once-solid American Jewry, all agree that Clinton has been one of the best friends Israel has ever had in the White House.



Netanyahu is a realist, and can read the American opinion polls, and will not set out deliberately to offend the leader of his most important ally. Even though the economic miracle of the past decade has made Israel almost as wealthy as Britain on a per capita basis, the US still contributes some $3 billion a year to Israel, including some essential military technology.

Whether Netanyahu will be dealing with a Clinton White House next year is an issue that may rest with the courts. After last week's verdicts the president looks curiously impotent as the next stage in the Whitewater saga unfolds. The independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, will determine whether new charges will be filed before November against people even closer to the Clintons than their former Whitewater partners, James and Susan McDougal, and Clinton's successor as governor of Arkansas, Jim Guy Tucker.

It is now clear that the president's old business associates in the Whitewater venture were crooks

Tucker was found guilty on two out of seven counts of fraud, James McDougal was found guilty on 18 of 19 counts, and Susan McDougal found guilty on all four charges. The irony is that these three may have it in their power to decide whether the Clintons eventually follow them into the dock.

There is an odd and troubling tradition in American jurisprudence, that in the pursuit of a big fish, a prosecutor can first catch a few small fry, and threaten them with harsh punishment unless they agree to help him reel in the prize catch. This is exactly what happened in the latest trial.

The main prosecution witness, a former Little Rock municipal judge named David Hale, had already been tried and convicted for fraud in the management of the small capital finance firm he ran, which specialised in making federally-backed loans for the Small Business Administration.

In return for a lighter sentence, he agreed to co-operate with Starr. It will be recalled that Webb Hubbell, the disgraced former assistant attorney-general and former Rose law firm partner, also agreed to co-operate when the time came for him to be sentenced.

There are evident dangers in such a procedure. For David Hale, the equation was clear: the worse he was for the McDougals and Tucker, the better for him. Starr, a former Republican solicitor-general whose reputation for impartiality is troublingly clouded, is now moving up the food chain. Deals are being dangled before the McDougals and Tucker, who is all the more vulnerable now that he has learned that he needs a liver transplant. The worse these three can make it for the Clintons, the better for them, a procedure that might strike non-Americans as more vindictive than just.

However, these Arkansans are made of sterner stuff than Starr thought. Hubbell managed to keep his dignity, along with most of his silence, and a dissatisfied prosecutor tossed him back to jail. Jim McDougal swore last week that "honours forbids" making such a deal with the prosecution. His wife Susan, without mentioning honour, made similar noises.

While Starr tests their fibre over the next few weeks, another trial is getting under way in Little Rock, of two bankers accused of illegal funding during Governor Clinton's 1990 campaign. It is quite transparent that through them Starr is trying to get at Bruce Lindsey, who was responsible for Clinton's campaign finances. If he can get Lindsey, he may be able to strike directly at his ultimate target, the Clintons.

Few in the White House or at the American bar seriously expect Starr to go nuclear, with a formal criminal charge against Hillary Clinton, before the election. He may name her as "a target" of his grand jury investigation in Washington, which is almost as bad. But short of such a charge, the effect on the election is not at all clear. It offers the likely Republican challenger, Bob Dole, an opportunity, but there is a cruel joke going around to the effect that the Republicans might be able to do something with this if only Bob Dole were alive.

Dole is doing a little better than that. He was campaigning in Illinois and Ohio this past week, and also made a foray to California to deny that he would ever give up campaigning in such a vote-rich state, however big Clinton's lead in the opinion polls. He had little choice. After the expense of the primaries, Dole can legally spend no more money until after the Republican convention in August.

He, therefore, depends on the party to spend money for him, on ads that bash Clinton without ever saying "Vote Dole". The party has made it clear that Dole will campaign in California, and spend at least $10 million there after the convention. Without Dole fighting hard at the head of the ticket, the Republicans fear losing a swathe of congressional seats.

Dole is not a great campaigner. He seems to have borrowed his strategy from the 1988 campaign by Bush, who came out of the conventions 17 points behind Mike Dukakis, his Democratic rival.

Bush then waged a ruthless campaign of values, wrapping himself in the flag, sneering at Dukakis for his revulsion at the death penalty and finally, notoriously, turning Willy Horton into a household name. Horton was a convicted black rapist, freed by Governor Dukakis on a parole programme, who raped and killed again.

That TV ad, as nakedly racist as politics has been played for decades, could be disavowed because it was run not by the Bush campaign, but by an allied group. The ad was devised by a young Republican activist called Floyd Brown, who specialises in dirty tricks. In 1992, he set up a Gennifer Flowers hotline with an invitation to dial in and hear the Flowers-Clinton tapes. For the past two years, Brown has been running a group called Citizens United, a newsletter, fax and information service on Whitewater and Arkansas scandals.

In 1988, Clinton flew to Boston to plead with Dukakis to fight back against the dirty Republican campaigning, to go on the offensive and challenge every attack. Dukakis thought it wasn't necessary. In 1992, Clinton's famous war room did exactly that. If Dole is like one of those generals who is well prepared to fight the last war, he will find Clinton more than familiar with the tactics.

But if Clinton has to fight against Bob Dole, Floyd Brown, Kenneth Starr and the plea-bargain brigade of Arkansas all at once, then he may well end up like his friend Shimon Peres, out of office.

Martin Woollacott, page 12
Washington Post, page 14

Millions cross ex-Soviet borders

Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva

MORE than 9 million former Soviet citizens, one in 30 of the population, have been on the move since the collapse of the communist system, according to a United Nations study.

Many of them have fled fighting. Ethnic disputes in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have led to 1.5 million people leaving their homes. Similar population movements have been caused by fighting in Moldova, Tajikistan and Chechenia. Russia has absorbed the biggest inflow of people as ethnic Russians seek the safety of their motherland.

People have also been forced to move for fear of nationalist discrimination and because of environmental crises.

Humanitarian agencies believe such movements will be destabilising. While some new countries, especially those in Central Asia, are suffering from a "brain drain" others, like Russia, are having to cope with millions of new arrivals.

Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN's assistant high commissioner for refugees, says: "With so many on the move there is a risk of economic development being undermined and regional security being threatened." The UNHCR believes an improvement in human rights could reduce population flows.

In the Soviet era, Russians moved to other republics where they were put in positions of authority. Many are now back home, and those who have chosen to stay put face problems.

Russian was the accepted language of the Soviet Union and few ethnic Russians bothered to learn the local language. But the new governments have all declared official their own languages. Some are demanding knowledge of that language as a job requirement.

Some migrants are escaping from the Soviet Union's nuclear programmes. Nuclear contamination in Chernobyl and the Kazakh test site of Semipalatinsk has produced at last 700,000 ecological migrants.

Post-Soviet migration

Key: Fleeing from fighting; Ecological migrants; Former deported; Russians returning home

Moscow, Minsk, BELARUS, RUSSIA, Chernobyl, Kiev, UKRAINE, KAZAKHSTAN, UZBEKISTAN, CHECHENIA, GEORGIA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, TURKMENISTAN, Ankara, TURKEY, 400 km

The former Soviet states are also trying to unravel Stalin's policy of shifting populations. His regime moved 3 million people from their homes to other Soviet regions.

Entire national groups, such as the Volga Germans, the Chechens and the Crimea Tatars, were moved in cattle trucks to Siberia or Central Asia. Their descendants have been trying to get back home.

When the Soviet system collapsed, politicians feared a wave of immigration from East to West. In fact, most of the population movements have been contained within the borders of the former Soviet Union.

A healthy appetite for wood waste

Jon Henley in Helsinki

FOOD from wood may not sound appetising, but a new Finnish spread, the key ingredient of which is a waste product of the forestry industry, has got international investors' mouths watering — and is causing log-jams at Finnish supermarkets.

Benecol, a revolutionary margarine that unlike low-fat products actually reduces the body's cholesterol levels, could turn into Finland's biggest success story since Nokia mobile phones.

Demand for the product has overwhelmed its manufacturer, a little-known food and chemicals company called Raisio, and Finnish supermarkets are having to hang up signs apologising for having sold out.

"It's chaos when a batch comes in," said Auli Kanerva, a sales manager at a Helsinki foodstore. "We tried to restrict it to a tub a customer, but they cried blue murder."

Benecol's active ingredient is plant sterol, a compound routinely washed away by pulp mills which has been scientifically shown to lower blood cholesterol, a leading cause of heart disease.

Plant sterol has been known for some time to reduce cholesterol levels, but Raisio's innovation was to develop a process — now being patented internationally — to make the compound soluble in fat. A study by Helsinki university showed Benecol, used as an ordinary margarine, reduced blood cholesterol levels by 14 per cent.

While it will be at least two years before the spread is available outside Finland, Raisio's headquarters, 170km west of Helsinki, has been overrun with bankers and brokers from London, Frankfurt and New York. The company's share price has multiplied fivefold since January.

"In fact, what gets sold abroad may not necessarily be margarine," said company spokesman Sten von Hellen. "What's important is that you eat small quantities of plant sterol regularly. So in the northern European 'sandwich belt' margarine is appropriate, but elsewhere it could be chocolate, or ice cream, or oil for cooking fish and chips."

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Sleaze returns to haunt Tories as minister resigns

ROD RICHARDS was an abrasive junior minister in the Welsh Office until the weekend, when a tabloid newspaper reported allegations that he was having an extramarital affair. Within hours he had resigned, without even the usual courtesies of an exchange of letters with the Prime Minister, who normally expresses his "regret" and "appreciation" of services rendered.

He was the tenth serving member of the Major administration to quit after a personal scandal and his departure will doubtless revive the allegations of sleaze in Tory ranks which the party has sought hard to dispel over the past year.

Given the church-going nature of his Clwyd North West constituency, where he had been spearheading a campaign for a return to traditional family values, Mr Richards could well face the possibility of being de-selected at the next election, though there is little risk of the Tories losing the seat. The immediate — and embarrassing — problem for Mr Major was finding a replacement minister for the Welsh Office.

The remaining six Welsh Tory MPs are an endangered species, and Welsh-speaking ones are all but extinct. All governments try to install at least one Welsh speaker in the Welsh Office to pacify the 20 per cent of the principality's voters who still still speak the language. That was Mr Richards's role. Since there was no other acceptable candidate, the job went to Jonathan Evans, a junior minister overseeing the important Divorce Bill in the Lord Chancellor's department. He said he could at least manage the Welsh national anthem.

IMPRESSED by the "zero tolerance" strategy practised by the New York Police Department, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard is studying a similar scheme to deal with "yob culture". The aim, said the Home Office, would be to stamp out anti-social behaviour — drinking in public, graffiti, vandalism, begging, rough sleeping — which fell short of criminality but affected the quality of neighbourhood life.

The success of the police crackdown in New York is claimed by its mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, to have turned it into the safest large city in America. NYPD methods were studied by Mr Howard on a visit earlier this year and he has instructed ministers to draw up similar plans.

Tough action of this sort has long been advocated by the shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, rather to the annoyance of some of his colleagues. "Labour has long understood", he said, "that anti-social behaviour ruins many people's lives and heightens their fear of crime and lawlessness." But he complained that every time he had proposed measures to deal with public disorder Mr Howard had rubbished them.

VIOLENT bullying has increased in schools and is spilling on to the streets, according to a support group, ChildLine, which accused many schools of ignoring the problem in spite of the misery it caused for children and their parents.

A study found that 10 children a year commit suicide because of bullying, and that many more considered it. Of those pupils who responded to a questionnaire, 80 per cent were girls, which suggests that boys still suffer from the stigma of "telling". Many schools refused to co-operate in the study, saying they had no problems with bullying. Most boys complained of physical attacks, while girls were subjected equally to physical and mental abuse.

ChildLine believes that the first step towards ending bullying is for adults to realise that it is not a natural part of growing up. It also urges that schools to appoint a teacher to oversee anti-bullying policies.

SARA THORNTON, whose case became a *cause célèbre* when she was given a mandatory life sentence for the murder of her husband, was released after a retrial which found her guilty of manslaughter. The sentence for this was five years' imprisonment — a period she had already served.

Ms Thornton, who became an icon for feminist groups campaigning on behalf of battered wives, stabbed her husband while he was in a drunken stupor. The retrial judge said he took account of the difficulties of living with an alcoholic and sentenced her on the basis that "killing your husband was diminished by the abnormality of your mind".

The verdict revived demands — already supported by many leading lawyers — that mandatory life sentences be abolished to allow judges to fit the punishment to the fact of each crime. And feminist campaigners urged the Home Office to review the cases of 70 other women serving prison sentences for killing their male partners.

THE GOVERNMENT faced the worrying prospect of a national postal strike when the Communication Workers Union voted in favour of industrial action after an 11-month dispute with the Royal Mail over new working practices.

Management demands a new system of "team working" which, it claims, would increase flexibility and improve the pay of some workers while reducing that of others. "Last ditch" talks between the two sides will be held next week.





Taxi rank and file . . . Sinn Fein supporters riding in a black cab cavalcade through the streets of west Belfast after voting in Northern Ireland's elections to all-party talks last week PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN LEWIS

Sinn Fein triumphs in poll

David Sharrock

THE IRA is under renewed pressure from London and Dublin to restore its ceasefire after its political wing, Sinn Fein, scored notable successes in last week's Northern Ireland's elections to all-party talks.

Even as supporters of the Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams began to celebrate his overwhelming victory in the constituency of West Belfast, as well as overtaking their nationalist rivals in John Hume's SDLP in a number of seats, the British and Irish prime ministers were strongly restating that the party could not take its place at the talks, due to begin on June 10, unless the IRA ended its violence.

But the indication from Sinn Fein was that, if anything, the strength of its vote has not brought an IRA ceasefire any nearer. "We have the mandate, the onus is now on the two governments," Mr Adams said. "Clearly the majority of people in West Belfast are Sinn Fein voters and they have the right to be treated on an equal basis as the voters in all other parts of this island and on the same basis as those who vote for all the other parties.

"You can't have a situation of imposing an election and then not respect the outcome. The IRA did not stand in this election. My focus between now and June 10 is to try and get John Major to accept the outcome of an election which he called. We have fulfilled every single thing which has been asked of us."

He was supported by the leading Republican, Gerry Kelly, who won a seat in North Belfast. "We went to the electorate and they gave us a substantial vote. John Major should recognise that."

Mr Major hailed the elections as a "great boost" to the peace process and issued a direct appeal to the IRA to declare a fresh ceasefire. The people had defied those who claimed they would not understand the reasons for elections or the voting system and turned out in large numbers "to vote for peace and democracy".

"I hope the IRA will now heed this democratic vote for peace by declaring an unequivocal ceasefire, thus opening the way for Sinn Fein's representatives to take part in the negotiations with the other parties."

His comments were endorsed by the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, who warned Sinn Fein that "the qualification for participation in the talks have not been changed and will not change".

But he added that there were grounds for optimism. Dublin is interpreting intense interest by Sinn Fein in the arrangements for the talks as a positive indication for a new ceasefire.

The SDLP leader, John Hume, added his weight to the two prime ministers' views. Mr Hume, who played a key role in persuading the IRA to call its last ceasefire in August 1994, said he hope the IRA would now lay down its weapons forever.

He was speaking after Sinn Fein won 17 seats to the 110-member Northern Ireland Forum. Alongside some spectacular results in individual seats at the SDLP's expense, the overall Sinn Fein share of the vote went from 12.4 per cent at the 1993 district council election to a record 15.47 per cent.

The nationalist SDLP still managed to finish in third place overall with 21 seats despite losing support to Sinn Fein. The Ulster Unionists finished first with 30 places, and Ian Paisley's hard-line Democratic Unionists performed strongly, ending up with 24 seats.

The election was a muted success for Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble, who originally suggested it. "We want to see the process move forward with those parties that are committed to peaceful means and the democratic process," he said. "That puts a big question mark against certain parties." If they were not prepared to join the process "then the process must go forward without them".

Comment, page 12

A nugget too far for McDonald's employee

IT WAS a case of two chicken McNuggets too far. A McDonald's employee, who, like a latter-day Oliver Twist, wanted more than her lunchtime allowance of six battered bits of poultry, has been sacked for gross misconduct, *writes Sarah Boseley*.

McDonald's was unwilling to take Cathy Shephard's predilection for its food as a compliment to the chef. The 17-year-old who worked in the drive-through branch in Strood, Kent, appealed further up the hierarchy, but was given her cards.

A spokeswoman for McDonald's said: "She would have been entitled to a McDonald's extra value meal — chicken nuggets or a quarter pounder or a Big Mac and fries and a drink," she said. "She should have taken an order of six nuggets. She took an order bigger than that."

Clearly she liked the food, but McDonald's has a rigid food policy and does not hold with the practices of chocolate factories where conveyor-belt packers may eat and eat until they are sick.

Ms Shephard's addiction to fast food was such that she had helped herself to a bit extra on an earlier occasion. "She had been warned 11 days earlier that abusing the food allowance was a sackable offence," the spokeswoman said.

Ms Shephard, who had worked for McDonald's for just under a year, said: "We are talking about losing my job over a few pennies."

While McDonald's is proud of its staff policies, burger chains are not famous for their generosity to staff.

Last year Burger King changed its mind in the face of bad publicity and paid compensation to workers who had been told to clock off, thereby losing pay, whenever there were few customers in the restaurant.

Labour plans curfew for 'under-10s'

Alan Travis

JACK STRAW, the shadow home secretary, was at the centre of controversy inside and outside the Labour party this week after suggesting the introduction of night-time curfew powers on children under 10.

He said he did not want to go as far as some American cities, where police have the power to impose an 8pm curfew on the under-17s to curb youth crime.

"There is very great concern about the number of younger children who are out on the streets late at night," he said. "This is not chasing every kid off the street. We are talking about the under-10s possibly being off the streets by 9pm.

"I see them when I'm driving back from the Commons and wonder where their parents are. Curfews seem to be a sensible way to deal with the issue. We are considering giving local authorities the new power in a specific area which they could only introduce after consultation with the police."

But within hours of his comments, Labour's chief whip, Donald Dewar, said on BBC radio: "My first instinct is that this is a problem of very real proportions. I'm not sure that a curfew would be a workable solution. But what I do believe is that any responsible political party should be considering these problems."

Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat spokesman on young people, said: "Curfews to stop youth crime is the latest simplistic, unenforceable and dangerous Labour idea. Curfews in time of local and national civil unrest are one thing. Curfews for law-abiding young people going about their normal activities is another."

Mr Straw said his idea was based on bylaws pioneered in 1988 by Coventry city council. He denied any link with an initiative, backed by President Clinton, developed in New Orleans to combat youth crime.

However, an idea from the Home Secretary does seem to be a British version of the Alabama chain gang. Michael Howard wants to introduce distinctive "mark of shame" uniforms for offenders undertaking community service punishments in public. The idea, put forward in Britain by the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, would mean offenders wearing community service jackets instead of their own clothes when digging ditches, cleaning up graffiti or doing other community work.

It is expected that the idea will be included in Mr Howard's Crime Bill this autumn.

The Labour leader's office broadly supported Mr Straw, saying Tony Blair was deeply concerned about very young people roaming the streets at night. A spokesman stressed that the practicalities of the idea had to be examined. But Clive Soley, the Labour MP, said policies to help families were needed rather than curfews.

● David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, called for a back to basics reading crusade as part of the most radical reform of primary teaching since the sixties.

A future Labour government's target that all children in England and Wales should have a reading age of 11 when they leave primary school — unless they have special needs — will mean jettisoning much of the national curriculum in the early years, he told the National Association of Head Teachers' conference in Torquay.

Comment, page 12

Woodhead ups pressure on schools

Donald MacLeod

TEACHERS must scrap progressive child-centred teaching methods in primary schools which have left young people lagging behind students in other countries in mathematics and literacy, Chris Woodhead, HM Chief Inspector, announced this week.

A forthcoming Office for Standards in Education report on international standards in mathematics will point up the benefits of whole class teaching in countries such as Taiwan, where children start secondary school two years before their English counterparts.

David Reynolds, of Newcastle university, who carried out the Ofsted survey, found maths in England was relatively poor. "English educationists now need to look beyond their own geographical boundaries to see why it is that other countries may be doing better than we do."

The way the Plowden report of 1967, with its advocacy of child-centred methods, had been interpreted in some schools should be buried, said Mr Woodhead. "It is the burial of those misplaced understandings, misunderstandings of what education is all about."

While denying he was laying down teaching methods, Mr Woodhead made clear the style he favoured. Whole class teaching should amount to 60 per cent of primary maths lessons instead of 25 per cent at present, "I am telling teachers that in other countries — in Europe and the Pacific rim — pupils are achieving more in maths."

However, Colin Richards, a former senior adviser at Ofsted, who has already accused Mr Woodhead of manipulating data to paint a blacker picture of schools, criticised his "narrow, utilitarian view of what primary education is all about", and said that too much prescription about teaching methods would turn schools into dull, arid places.

Mr Richards said: "It is invalid to assume you can take any one particular factor from another culture and transplant it more or less intact."

David Burghes of Exeter university, whose research indicated that the degree pupils in England (and Scotland) were trailing behind their peers in Germany, Singapore and Poland, said part of the blame must lie with the national curriculum, the key stage tests and GCSE.



A British Airways Concorde leads the Red Arrows in a flypast to mark Heathrow airport's 50th anniversary on Sunday PHOTOGRAPH, TONY HARRIS

Britain blocks EU moves it favours

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Government's beef war with the European Union seemed likely to reach new heights of absurdity this week with ministers forced to block agreements on racism, workplace rights for women, and even the fight against fraud in the EU.

In a series of ministerial meetings in Luxembourg on Monday and Tuesday, a succession of ministers ranging from the Europhile Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, to the Europhobic Home Secretary, Michael Howard, blocked dozens of measures which the Government has previously said it accepts.

The British tactics coincided with the start of more conciliatory talks between Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and EU heads of government about a possible framework for the lifting of the beef ban.

With John Major saying he wants the framework agreed before the EU summit in Florence on June 21, it is clear that time to reach an agreement is running out.

Officials are proposing that the ban be lifted progressively on calves born after March 29 this year, when the Government announced full enforcement of restrictions on animal feed, then on meat from animals under 30 months of age.

The next steps would be to lift the ban on animals reared on grass or from BSE-free herds, then on the export of animals to countries which do not have re-export agreements to the EU, such as South Korea and Indonesia, so that there is no danger of British meat surreptitiously finding its way back into Europe. Finally the ban would be lifted on the export of embryos.

However, Britain's immediate hopes of lifting the ban on beef derivatives received a blow on Monday when EU agriculture ministers voted by 9-6 that the ban on byproducts such as gelatin, tallow and semen should be lifted. But the vote in favour was not enough under the complex qualified majority voting rules. The Commission will now unilaterally lift the ban on derivatives at its regular meeting in Brussels, probably next week.

Among the projects jeopardised at other meetings will be the proposal to designate next year for an offensive against racism in the EU.

The move is highly ironic in view of the upsurge of what Jacques Santer, the European Commission president, described last week as racism and xenophobia, primarily in the British press, over the beef crisis.

Meanwhile, the Treasury Chief Secretary, William Waldegrave, became the first serving cabinet minister to hold out the prospect of Britain leaving the EU, in direct contradiction to the Prime Minister's insistence that anyone making such a suggestion is living in cloud cuckoo land.

Mr Waldegrave claimed the jury was still out on Britain's EU membership, adding "it is not madness to say we could be outside the EU".

The Treasury and Mr Waldegrave immediately mounted a damage limitation exercise claiming his remarks were being wrenched out of context and that he merely stated it was legally possible for Britain to be outside Europe.

However, Mr Waldegrave speaking on BBC radio, appeared to go further. He said: "The nub of the issue is whether we are now finding issues that so grate in terms of our independence and our sovereignty that Europe is impossible for us. I think the jury is still out on that. It is not madness to say we should be outside Europe. Of course Britain can be outside the European Union if it wanted to be."

Jacques Santer . . . claims of xenophobia in the British press

Only last month, in a speech to the Institute of Directors, John Major ruled out leaving Europe: "The idea of becoming a trading haven on the edge of Europe when others fix the rules without any regard to our self-interest is living in cloud cuckoo land. We are in Europe and we are staying there."

Doctors back torture claims

NEW evidence supporting a Nigerian's claims to have been tortured as a political activist — which were dismissed as incredible by an immigration appeal adjudicator six months ago — has been sent to the Home Office, *writes David Pallister*.

Ablogun Igbinidu, aged 26, has been detained since he arrived at Heathrow last June and claimed political asylum.

On the eve of his intended deportation last December, Mr Igbinidu's case became notorious when officials from Conservative Central Office were accused of dirty tricks by leaking partial information about him to the Guardian. The new corroboration of his torture claims comes in a medical report from a clinic in his home town of Benin City. It says he was brought to the hospital in October, 1994, "suffering from painful distress with multiple bruises and contusions over the face, arms and legs".

Three British medical experts who have examined Mr Igbinidu have also concluded that his condition is consistent with having being tortured.

A Benin firm of lawyers has now confirmed that he was an activist for the opposition Campaign for Democracy.

£1m award for trauma

Duncan Campbell and Owen Bowcott

THE award of more than £1 million to police officers traumatised by the Hillsborough football stadium disaster in 1989 provoked warnings of "floodgates" opening for similar claims.

Fourteen junior officers who dealt with the dead and dying and suffered psychological problems as a result have accepted £1.2 million. The highest awards are for more than £200,000, which include lost earnings and pension rights. The smallest awards were less than £10,000 for officers still serving. The highest award for stress was nearly £40,000.

The officers include those who entered the pens in which many of the 96 fans at the Liverpool-Nottingham Forest FA Cup semi-final died.

In a settlement agreed at Sheffield High Court, the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire, Sheffield Wednesday FC and the club's engineers admitted liability.

Senior officers privately expressed dismay at the awards which they believe will set a precedent and "could open the floodgates" to other claims from emergency service workers. They fear that the size of the settlements, which come from police budgets, will affect staffing levels.

● London Underground is funding the world's largest study into post traumatic stress disorder after it discovered that hundreds of its staff suffer from the condition commonly associated with war veterans. Symptoms include anxiety, insomnia, nightmares and flashbacks.

Universities threaten fees

Donald MacLeod

TOP universities are threatening to impose fees of £3,000 a year unless the Government pumps more money back into higher education.

The war of nerves between ministers and university vice-chancellors was stepped up this week, with the official entrance guide warning students not to delay applying for a year in case they are faced with tuition fees in 1997.

"If you have a place this year you should take it, otherwise you might be caught out by a fee next year. Our recommendation is, don't waste a year improving grades," said Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

Universities were furious to lose 30 per cent of capital funding for equipment in the November Budget. Faced with a threat by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals to levy a £300 fee on new students to make up for cuts in the budget, Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, set up an inquiry headed by Sir Ron Dearing into higher education funding.

The levy was not implemented but many universities say they cannot wait for Sir Ron's inquiry, which is widely expected to recommend tuition fees from 1999 coupled to an Australian-style graduate tax.

"Unless the Government does something about the budget we will be forced to consider fees in 1997. This would certainly be more than £300 — it would be nearer £3,000," said a spokesman for the committee.

In Brief

STATE-FINANCED loans to fund litigation for the middle classes and the abolition of free legal aid for benefit claimants are among far-reaching changes under consideration in the biggest shake-up of the legal aid system in its 46-year history.

THE Queen was forced to cut short a visit to Wales after police failed to contain a demonstration by about 200 Welsh language students at Aberystwyth university where she was due to open a new library.

A LAW to force water companies to compensate customers for cuts in supply was promised as an official report damned the industry's performance on leaks. Yorkshire Water, the company synonymous with water shortages and public relations disasters, was "fined" £40 million.

THE AIDS epidemic, which Britain has been more successful in containing than most countries, could slip out of medical control if government funding cuts go ahead, the British Medical Association said.

THE Government has told health authorities to increase the number of intensive care beds for children by more than a fifth over the next four years, although there will be no extra money to do so.

THE chair of European Thought at Balliol College, Oxford University, has been saved by an anonymous donor weeks after the original benefactor, the grandson of a Nazi war criminal, withdrew his donation.

THE Edinburgh lecturer Christopher Brand, who said he was proud to be a "racist", was ordered to modify his teaching style after a university inquiry.

PETER Thomson, the Australian vicar and spiritual mentor to Tony Blair, has taken up a job as a vicar in north London, 10 minutes from the Opposition leader's home.

SMOKERS are being discriminated against by doctors, who are less likely to offer them heart bypass operations than non-smokers, according to a report funded by the British Heart Foundation.

PRISONERS are switching from soft to hard drugs to avoid detection in mandatory drug tests, says the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence.

SEVEN black and Asian workers at the Ford motor plant in Dagenham are taking the company to an industrial tribunal for alleged racism. They claim they have been barred from better-paid jobs because of their colour.

Dunblane massacre 'planned for two years'

Erlend Clouston

"THERE was a period of time when everything seemed to be very quiet. It seemed to last a long time." Although nobody at the inquiry except Eileen Harrild, the part-time PE teacher, had heard the shots in the gym at Dunblane Primary, they reverberated in their heads.

Mary Blake, the supervisory assistant whose statement transfixed the opening day of Lord Cullen's investigation into the Dunblane massacre last week, had had a similar, hallucinatory experience, during the nightmare of March 13.

Describing the moment when "the dark figure" was framed in the doorway of the gym, initially pumping a total of 105 bullets into primary one, she said: "The screaming seemed to be inside my head." She made the point twice in a statement that was read out on her behalf.

The massacre may have been planned two years in advance by Thomas Hamilton, the Cullen inquiry into the killings later heard.

In an earlier written statement, a nine-year-old Dunblane boy revealed how Hamilton had regularly pressed him for for the past two years for information about the layout and timetable of the town's primary school. In the week before March 13, Hamilton had once more taken the boy to one side during a session of the sports club held at Dunblane High School.

"He asked me the way to the gym and the way to the hall. He asked what time certain classes went to the gym and the main way into the school," the boy, who remained unidentified, said.

While witnesses talked of a long-held grievance over the authorities' suspicions about his sports clubs, it appears Hamilton finally settled on his act of revenge only late last year. Between last December and last February, he bought 2,300 rounds — 1,700 of them the 9mm bullets which killed the 16 children and their teacher.

The first day of the inquiry into Britain's worst murder case held some sinister revelations: the reported discovery of 63 pairs of boys' swimming trunks in Hamilton's home; the fact that he had cut the telephone line to the school before heading in with four guns and a total of 743 bullets.

But the testimony of the two staff members brought the inquiry to the heart of the tragedy. One minute Mrs Harrild was laying out ropes and beams for the children; the next she was stumbling into the gym store, bullets in her chest and arms. One moment Mrs Blake was looking after her pupils; the next she was lying in a pool of her blood, trying to hide terrified youngsters under a gym mat. Both women told how the fusillade continued, faltered briefly then picked up again as he proceeded up the hall.

Then Hamilton transferred his empty Browning pistol to his left hand, pulled out his Smith and Wesson, put the muzzle in his mouth and fired. The bullet went through his head, hit the ceiling and fell to the floor.

● Thousands of gun owners have given up their weapons and surrendered their certificates in the aftermath of Dunblane. Police forces nationwide have received letters from gun owners explaining that the tragedy had made them give up their sport. Under a nationwide amnesty that started on Monday illegal guns can also be handed to police without reprisal.

Major slams ethnic mix in Commons

Andrew Culf

JOHN MAJOR criticised the ethnic composition of the Commons in a television interview last week.

Speaking on BBC TV's magazine programme, East, the Prime Minister said: "The present mix of the House of Commons does not remotely reflect the mix of the country as a whole, either in terms of Asian candidates, West Indian candidates, or indeed the male and female balance of the population."

But it was a matter for local constituency parties in which Central Office could not intervene.

Drawing on experiences of living with ethnic groups during his upbringing in Brixton, south London, he described himself as "colourblind" and rejected suggestions that the Eurosceptical wing of the party had racist tendencies.

The interviewer, Martin Bashir, also questioned the Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown.

Mr Ashdown, who was asked why there were only three Asian MPs at Westminster, said: "Because the House of Commons is a club for white middle-class males, and that means others are excluded from it . . . I hate the pomposity, the self-satisfaction of this place."

Mr Blair said: "There aren't any problems with the process of selection in the sense that the party or the party hierarchy is trying to prevent Asian people coming through the selection process.

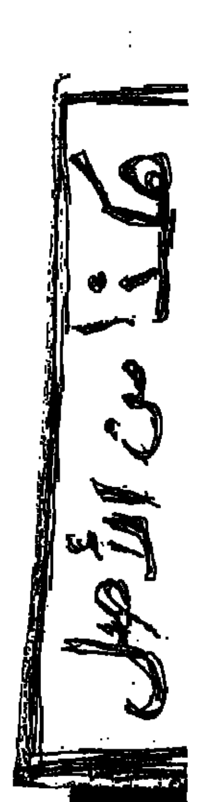
"We are committed to it and are keen to make it possible for more Asian people to come through and represent constituencies, particularly . . . where there's a very high Asian population."

Labour is facing a legal challenge in Manchester from two Asian party members over selection of parliamentary candidates.

The three Asian MPs in the Commons are the Tory, Niranjan Deva (Brentford), and Labour's Keith Vaz (Leicester East) and Piara Khabra (Ealing Southall).

Diane Abbott, Labour MP for Hackney North, one of the small number of black MPs, accused Labour under Tony Blair of sidelining the issue of racial equality.

"There are no blacks or Asians in new Labour's inner circle. Mr Blair has to take a much more positive approach."



One last hurdle to Irish talks

ELECTIONS in Northern Ireland rarely change anything. Last week's, though, might just begin to break the mould. Like all Ulster elections, it was more about the relative party strengths within the respective unionist and nationalist traditions than about the relative position between them. Mighty important those internal battles among Catholic and Protestant voters have turned out to be this time. There has been a powerful swing to Sinn Fein among nationalist voters, severely weakening John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party, which now faces an internal crisis.

Meanwhile David Trimble's Ulster Unionists have won back the leadership of Unionist Northern Ireland from the Democratic Unionists. Even so, the Unionist vote has rarely been more fragmented; both the UUP and the DUP have been eroded by the most effective re-entry since the seventies of smaller unionist parties into the political equation.

There was also something more. Whereas all other elections in Northern Ireland are variations on the rituals by which the essential allegiances are reproduced, this one was also a means to an unprecedented end. It was a preparatory election to the convening on June 10 of all-party talks about the future of Northern Ireland, involving not merely the main constitutional parties but also politicians who speak for the armed militant traditions on both sides. Such talks have not happened before. Now at last they may — and should.

It is essential to remember that the talks are the whole point of these elections. In a narrow sense, they were the price which Mr Trimble's party demanded as the precondition for their participation in negotiations; that condition has now been fulfilled and the unionist parties must therefore play their rightful part inside the talks, not stay on the sidelines. But the talks were also the alternative precondition to arms decommissioning, as put forward by the British government following the Mitchell report. That has also been fulfilled, albeit grudgingly at first, by the main nationalist and republican parties. It was right that these parties overcame their suspicion and took part, and they too must have their reward. Now these parties, including Sinn Fein, must play their mandated role in the talks.

There is, however, a crucial problem to be overcome: the absence of an IRA ceasefire. Nothing will be gained by pretending this problem does not exist. The elections have now renewed all mandates, but both the Irish and British governments have said repeatedly that Sinn Fein cannot take part in talks without a ceasefire. How do we therefore get from here to where we want to be?

It is impossible to see how the talks can begin as originally envisaged without an urgent further political initiative, including fresh public assurances from the IRA. Such an obstacle was not intended when the elections were announced, but the end of the ceasefire has created it, and it remains a real stumbling block. If London and Dublin are as serious as they ought to be about getting the talks started, they must now act decisively and in concert to get Sinn Fein into the talks on an acceptable basis. More easily said than done? Of course. But overwhelmingly in everyone's interests too.

Slow return to economic health

FOR years, decades even, foreign exchange dealers in the City have operated on two unbreakable principles. First, nobody ever gets fired for selling the pound. Second, if there's the slightest risk of a Labour government sell even more pounds.

It may be time for a serious rethink. Sterling has become the darling of the dealers, rising strongly against the German mark despite John Major's precarious grip on power and the Government's policy of non co-operation with Europe over the beef ban. One reason is that the markets can spot a bargain when they see one. A recent report by Salomon Brothers found that the pound's real trade-weighted value against a basket of currencies was 11 per cent below the average in the 25 years from 1970 to 1995.

But there is more to it than that. The UK economy looks quite attractive to overseas investors, and all the more so because the rest of continental Europe is doing so badly. In fact, the markets probably take roughly the same view of Britain as the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which last week unveiled its annual health check of the UK.

Like the Government, the OECD believes the UK will soon emerge from its growth pause and perk up nicely in the second half of the year. Like the UK government, it believes the labour market reforms of the past 17 years are good for jobs. So much, so obvious. The OECD report is only released after consultation with the Treasury, so any nasty bits are airbrushed out. What is more, the think-tank's economists are firmly wedded to the idea that open markets, low inflation and labour market flexibility are the route to sustainable growth.

In fact, the OECD's forecasts look pretty accurate. Manufacturing in the UK is having a tough time, but should recover once stronger consumer spending eats into stocks of unsold goods and export markets brighten. Tony Blair could be the first Labour prime minister to inherit an economy in fairly good shape.

The markets would love it if, having stolen some of the Government's economic clothes, Mr Blair continued to wear them after the election. But Labour would do well to pay less attention to the OECD's policy prescriptions than its forecasting, particularly given the new pro-growth, anti-downsizing mood in the United States.

There is no evidence, thus far, that the current orthodoxy — crushing the last remnants of inflation and pricing frightened workers back into jobs — is the answer to the unemployment problem that is gripping the West. The official jobless total, lest we forget, is still double the level the Conservatives inherited in the bad old days of 1979.

Labour's curfew on common sense

WHEN Parliament re-assembles in Westminster this week, one of the first sounds we wish to hear is a clear repudiation of Jack Straw's confused argument for curfews on children. Tony Blair had better be clear about this. The Straw curfew, whether applied to teenagers or limited to 10-year-olds and under, is a rightwing, law-and-order lurch too far.

Mr Straw's idea of a 9pm curfew is a con-trick. It is cheap tough talk about a largely non-existent problem which will be made significantly worse by the cure he proposes. There is absolutely no evidence that a curfew is justified by the current scale of crime, even among juveniles. It is merely a trendy idea picked up off the peg from the US, which with its far higher crime rates and social dislocation is not a good policy model for Britain. Just because Bill Clinton has chosen to run with the curfew notion in election year, for his own rightwing reasons, this does not mean that it is right for Labour. Mr Straw claims to have dreamed up the policy because he has seen young people out on the streets at night while driving home from the Commons. That was the way Mrs Thatcher used to make policy.

Anyone who stops to think about the effect of a curfew upon law-abiding and delinquent young people alike will see that it could lead to increases in family violence and to more homeless runaways. If it is left to local authorities it will be inconsistent. If it is centrally imposed it will be indiscriminate. Either way, the policy would penalise large numbers of good and innocent young people, especially in the black community. But those least able to cope with the effects of the policy will be those most regularly subjected to it. The policy is wrong in effect and wrong in principle too. Problems of anti-social behaviour cannot be solved by locking them away inside people's homes. It is the social equivalent of brushing the mess under the carpet. The Labour party of all parties should not do that with human beings.

Mr Blair's pollsters and his instincts are telling him that Labour cannot afford to be seen as soft on crime, and doubtless this is the mainspring of the increasing rush to the right on law and order. But in the clamour to be tough on crime, Labour seems to have forgotten the other bit that Mr Blair once made famous — about being tough on the causes of crime. Labour's lurch to the right on crime may win it votes (though we wonder about that), but it will lose it political credibility and moral standing. Mr Straw may be happy to make that trade. Mr Blair should make clear it is a sell-out too far.

The soul of a nation locked in by its fear

Martin Woollacott

ISRAELIS have voted, or too many of them have, for the fantasy that there is such a thing as total security and that mastery over their neighbours, never achieved in the past, can somehow now be realised. In doing so they endanger themselves and everybody else. The Israelis risk the future not only of their region, but add their ominous decision to all those others, taken or pending, which in many parts of the globe could mean a return to conflict and war. For peace in the Middle East is not the exclusive property of Israelis, nor of Arabs, Iranians and Turks, but concerns the whole world in a way in which that of no other region does.

Israel's creation would have been impossible without the active support of Western countries and the acquiescence, at least, of many others. Its prosperity and its military power are also achievements to which others have contributed and continue to contribute. In this sense, for all its understandable feelings of loneliness and sometimes of despair, it is an international phenomenon, standing less on its own than other, smaller and weaker, countries. There are some nations whose elections and whose political decisions concern us all, and in which we feel we have a right, as it were, of indirect representation. Israel is pre-eminent among them. This the Israelis knew, and yet enough of them voted as they did to produce the result we see.

Or perhaps they did not know. In spite of their shrewdness and their worldly knowledge, too many Israelis lead isolated lives, failing to fully connect their decisions to the fate of those in other countries. They live, the Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu famously said, "in a tough neighbourhood", but the question is whether, mentally, some of them live in a neighbourhood at all. That includes Netanyahu himself, for the picture of the "neighbourhood" that he has conveyed to Israelis is based on a mechanistic and dehumanised model of terrorism. There are tyrannical states, such as Iran, Iraq, and Libya, which finance and control terrorist movements. Their aim is to destroy democracies by terrorising their innocent civilian populations.

There is no causation here, just an idea of evil which appears out of nowhere and must be ruthlessly opposed. In his essays and books on this topic, Netanyahu simply dismisses the argument that violent action almost always has some basis in conditions of oppression, of national interest, or at least of grievance. That does not mean that such action is justified. It does mean that a purely military response can never be more than temporarily successful. This is the lesson that Labour has learned but Likud has not.

But the secular voter who accepts Netanyahu's diagrammatic analysis of the war of the terrorists against the democracies is joined in Israel by the religious voter who has made territorial control into a sacred imperative. Israel is paying the price for the long appeasement of the religious by the secular parties. A substantial part of religious Israel has demanded and received systematic subsidies that allow them to live a pre-modern life, avoiding productive employment, modern education, modern relationships between the sexes. During that same period, they have shed their original objections to the Zionist territorial state. There are honourable exceptions, but many of them are now among its most irrational upholders.

Their ambitions now go beyond a subsidised autonomy within Israel and a substantial influence on religious questions. They begin to aspire to a role in leadership and the shaping of the whole society. This is the struggle that has become entangled with policies toward the Arabs.

There are ironic parallels with the growth of fundamentalism in Islamic countries like Turkey, where secular parties similarly funded a religious educational sysem that became the sociological base for a political movement.

This year's shift to separate elections for prime minister and the legislature was intended to ease the post-election task of coalition-building by giving the chosen prime minister more leverage. What it has done instead is to uncouple religious from secular politics. People can now avoid a vote for the main parties, with their unavoidably diverse, negotiated bundles of policies, and cast it instead for religious party programmes unalloyed by any serious contact with regional or international reality. They have done so, driving up religious representation in the parliament and shattering the representation of Labour and Likud. That could turn out to be the most important development of this campaign.

RELIGIOUS voter and Likud voter alike, have taken the Manichean option as far as peace with the Arabs is concerned. It can be argued that this refusal to extend a human understanding to the other side, and indeed to the world at large, characterises many of those who voted for Likud, and for the religious parties. Yet Labour, too, walked on this stage. The election campaign was a strangely distorted affair. If it was for the "soul of Israel" how was it that one more bus bombing would, it was regularly said, tip it against Shimon Peres?

What nonsense was this, that if another 20 Israelis were murdered, peace would go in the bin? And, if the election was about peace, why did Peres have to go to war in his efforts to win votes? Each leader played with the need of angry and fearful people for a simple drama in which what Israelis have is unquestionably theirs, and those who disturb their peace are summarily dealt with. This ultimately was the peace most at issue in the campaign, the peace to which Israelis feel they have an absolute right, the one-sided freedom from bullet or bomb, not the peace which they had still to finish making with others.

But most of those voters do grasp that Likud policy does not actually mean Israel can stop counting its dead. It is the emotional safety of an uncomplicated world, perhaps, that appealed more than the physical safety which Netanyahu, no more than Peres, can promise or deliver. It is the craving for that emotional safety, far from the messy, infuriating reality of the Middle East, from which Israel needs deliverance.

Likud Win Heralds Endless Tension

COMMENT
Stephen S. Rosenfeld

THE PEOPLE were voting on themselves in the Israeli elections. After decades spent diligently accumulating the military, political and economic sinews of power, they had reason to think they had seen well to Israel's national security and could finally reap the rewards of their labors. Then it turned out, through the suicide bombers, that their daily personal security was more at risk than ever before, or so it seemed. The appalling notion loomed that peace as conventionally defined would not bring security after all. The opposition leapt to exploit this bitter revelation. It speaks to the tremendous daily pressures that Israelis live under that they apparently yielded, though just barely, to the Likud wave.

I happen to think that Likud is a false prophet and that its message, if not softened, consigns Israel to endless tension and loneliness. But let us not underestimate the appeal of the Likud line. The party would downgrade the requirement for new accords based on mutual consent with neighbors — new accords would come hard now in the best of circumstances — and it would emphasize the uses of Israeli power. This line may have its political and diplomatic downside: it may unsettle Palestinians, Syrians and others and strain Israel's ties with its friends abroad. Unquestionably, however, it has its psychological validity: It answers to widespread feelings of endangerment and abandonment and, at least in theory, puts the defense and welfare of Israeli Jews back in their own hands.

This is the rationale for the Israeli siege mentality, for the Israeli nuclear bomb, for territorial annexation, for West Bank settlement, for sweeps into Lebanon, for indulgence of the occupation's excesses and the hard right and for much else. Some of this is offensive or dubious to outsiders but acceptable to many Israelis, including some number who did not vote for Likud.

The Jerusalem Report's Ze'ev Chafets notes sagely that this is not a political debate between liberals and conservatives but a more basic debate between rationalists and irrationalists. The former believe Israel is becoming a nation like any other and can fit in. The latter think the Jewish people are fated to be pursued and singled out no matter what they do. In the current circumstances the rationalists see great opportunity, the irrationalists great peril, of which the suicide bombers are merely the visible cutting edge.

The irrationalists may be beyond the reach of fact or argument. But surely the rationalists have the weight of reality on their side. In defense and the economy, Israel is among the nations most able to move into high-tech orbit. In diplomacy it is already in high international orbit. Its once-threatening, close-in neighbors are either being drawn into peace or deterred. To contain still-threatening, more-distant foes such as Iran and Iraq, Israel is piggybacking on an ever more strategically assertive United States. It retains the possibility, though Likud ideology denies it, of distinguishing among its adversaries, reaching out to reconcilable secularists (Yasser Arafat, Hafez Assad) while joining others in confronting irreconcilable extremists.



It is not for distant others to tell the Israelis to stop worrying about the suicide bombers. But we others can note that Israel is not paralyzed in the face of this peril. It was a Labor government, after all, that not only closed off the West Bank and Gaza after the bombings but made its closure structural, permanent and bearable by hiring 200,000 foreign guest workers to replace now-desperate Palestinian day laborers. It was Labor that did not hesitate to violate Lebanon in the latest Israeli sweep. It was Labor that did what was within Israel's power to prevent the feared election run-up bomb from going off.

Shimon Peres is variously hailed and put down as a visionary. What that turns out to mean is simply that he wants Israel to become a normal country with unrestricted contacts with other countries. These are fruits that Arab hostility along with their own assertiveness have denied Israelis and their pre-independence predecessors in the century since the modern Zionist movement was founded at Basel in 1897.

Likud still believes that it is not possible or safe to reach for mutually respectful neighborly contacts and that it is still necessary and even desirable to rely on its continued strategic dominance. It prefers military patrols and territorial buffers of Arab land to a "peace process" with a sponsor, the United States, it trusts only partly and with Arab parties it trusts hardly at all.

Likud, in short, is caught in a time warp. It cannot bring itself to recognize that in the great struggle to come abreast of the acceptance that Americans and many others take as their due, Israel is winning.

Arafat Stunned by Netanyahu's Victory

John Lancaster and Barton Gellman in Gaza City

STUNNED and dismayed by the victory of Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu in Israeli elections, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat huddled with his top advisers on Friday last week amid fears that Netanyahu's win could imperil his three-year effort to reach a permanent peace with Israel.

Arriving at their beachfront headquarters for a meeting that lasted past midnight, cabinet members uncharacteristically brushed past reporters without answering questions. Arafat has yet to comment publicly.

In several private conversations, however, Arafat expressed shock and anguish at the impending defeat of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, with whom he shared a Nobel Peace Prize and a close working relationship in pursuit of a Palestinian-Israeli settlement.

A Western diplomat, who spoke with Arafat at length on the day after the election, quoted him as saying: "The Israeli people have voted against peace. They want peace with Jordanians, they want peace with Egyptians, but they don't want peace with Palestinians." The diplomat added: "He's very gloomy. He really sees the peace process grinding to a halt."

An Arafat confidant in Gaza described the Palestinian leader as "in a state of shock".

"I've seen it happen before," the confidant said. "He gets so preoccupied with thinking about all the manifestations that you just sort of lose him."

Although Netanyahu was harshly critical of Peres' peacemaking efforts during the campaign, saying they had undermined Israel's security, the Likud leader has declared his fundamental support for the Middle East peace process and pledged to continue negotiations with the Palestinians.

Many Palestinians, moreover, do not seem to share Arafat's pessimistic view. In random interviews along the beachfront here last week, ordinary Palestinians welcomed Netanyahu's election, saying they were ready for a new interlocutor after months of disappointment with Peres.

Palestinians are intensely frustrated with what they regard as punitive measures by the Israelis, including the demolition of houses, mass arrests and border closures — imposed after Palestinian suicide bombers killed 59 people in Israel earlier this year — that have cut off tens of thousands from their jobs.

"We haven't tried the Likud party during the peace era. We have tried Labor," said Aziz Khalil, 29, as he lounged on the beachfront at sunset. "We want to see what Netanyahu is going to do."

On the face of it, the Likud platform — like Netanyahu's campaign rhetoric — is far less accommodating to Palestinian hopes. Among other things, Netanyahu has consistently described Arafat as a terrorist, flatly ruled out creation of a Palestinian state and said he will refuse even to discuss the subject of Jerusalem, the emotional center of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Netanyahu, in fact, began his tenure as the head of Likud by opposing the 1993 Palestinian-Israeli accord pledging mutual recognition and establishing a limited self-rule authority in Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Since then, the Labor Party government has transferred large chunks of land and power to Palestinian rule and withdrawn Israel's army from the major population centers of the West Bank, except Hebron.

Last month, the two sides began the most sensitive phase of their negotiations over Palestinian statehood and borders, the final status of Jerusalem and the fate of several million Palestinian refugees. Arafat believed that Peres, whatever his faults, was at least willing to show flexibility on these issues. Netanyahu, by contrast, has shown no willingness to compromise.

"If you just examine their declared position on the issues that are of utmost importance to us as Palestinians, the prospects for us are very gloomy right now," said Ziad Abu Amr, a political scientist and legislator in the newly elected Palestinian Council. "Labor did not promise us anything, but it did not have . . . fixed positions on these issues."

For now, at least, Arafat and the rest of the Palestinian leadership are trying to appear statesmanlike, asserting that their agreement was with the state of Israel and not with the Labor Party.

"We respect the right of the Israeli people to choose their own elected leaders," Planning Minister Nabil Shaath said last week. "We don't accept the premise that this was a vote against the peace process. That is a commitment by the two sides that is guaranteed by the world."

On election night, however, when the first exit polls suggested a Peres victory, Shaath gave the game away by publicly proclaiming his relief.

After Netanyahu emerged as the apparent victor, top American diplomats placed calls to Arafat. Their message was that Netanyahu would have to show more flexibility as a prime minister. "I don't think he buys that," said someone who also spoke to Arafat.

Give Israel's New Leader Some Time

EDITORIAL

IT WAS the soldiers, who are most at risk for the choice, whose votes confirmed the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu in the Israeli elections.

His Likud party lost seats and remains second to Labor in the parliament, but he won the popular vote and Netanyahu will form a government.

His first task will be to find his feet in his own party, where some of his campaign rhetoric and hawks like Gen. Ariel Sharon are tugging him to take early, provocative acts.

This runs against his calculation to start out with words and gestures that will calm the many people everywhere who ask whether his pursuit of security on Likud's terms will create a crisis by undercutting further pursuit of Arab-Israeli peace on mutually agreed terms.

Washington is torn between respect for the workings of the popular will in a country that enjoys great American favor, and scarcely concealed concern lest Netanyahu unravel a Mideast diplomatic initiative in which the United States and President Clinton personally have made a heavy investment.

But there is also a certain awareness that there may be more to Netanyahu than initially meets the American eye. His campaign played assiduously on popular Israeli fears of terrorism and future uncertainty, but these are specters not unrelated to the uniqueness of life in Israel. There is an element of fundamentalist ideology to his political thinking, but there is a streak of pragmatism too.

The Nixon and de Gaulle precedents make many Americans wonder if a hard-liner cannot traverse certain difficult passages more easily than a moderate. It was Likud, after all, that returned Sinai for a peace with Egypt.

Israel has its continuing obligations to the United States: to keep its policy under the umbrella of the remarkable public and official consensus that has ensured broad American support for the Jewish state since its founding.

An Israeli government that breached that consensus would be taking risks that an Israeli public might well find unbearable. Currently that consensus implies support for American peace diplomacy and for the substantial strategic benefits it is intended to deliver to Washington.

The two countries also have mutual obligations. One is that they be open and candid in their dealings with one another, so that each can participate in the making of decisions that touch its important interests.

The United States has its own accumulated obligations to Israeli to maintain a level of basic support for its ally's security.

As he takes office, Netanyahu deserves the presumption that he understands these fundamentals.

Three Guilty in Fraud Trial

R.H. Melton and Michael Haddigan

A FEDERAL jury handed Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr a decisive victory in Little Rock, Arkansas, last week by convicting two of President Clinton's former business partners and Democratic Governor Jim Guy Tucker of nearly all the fraud and conspiracy charges Starr lodged against them 10 months ago.

Tucker, now in his second term, promptly announced his resignation, saying he will leave office by July 15.

The jury of nine women and three men ended the three-month-long trial by convicting James B. McDougal, who once owned a Little Rock savings and loan association, of 18 charges of conspiracy and fraud.

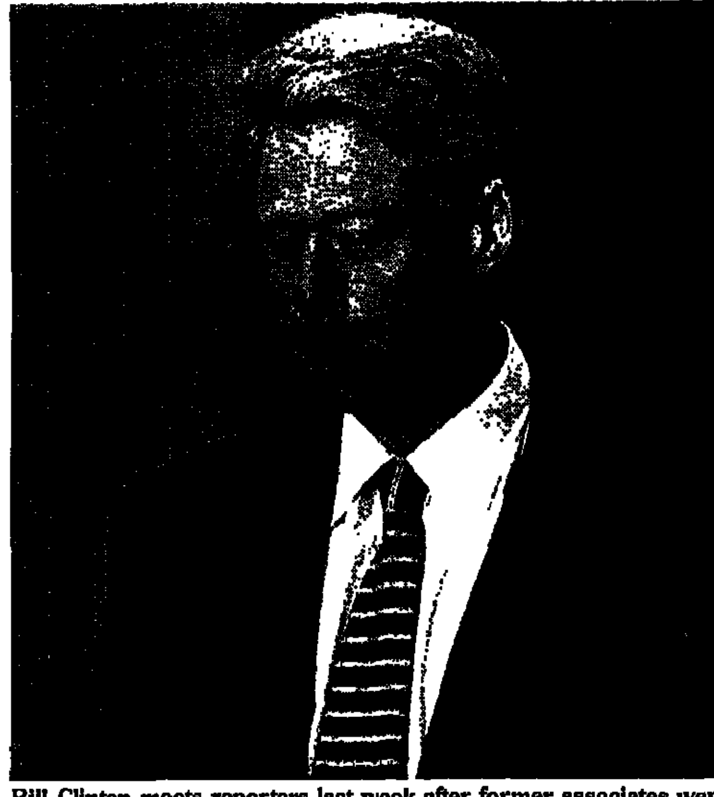
McDougal's former wife, Susan, who some courtroom observers believed would be acquitted because of her lesser role in the fraudulent transactions, was convicted on all four charges against her, which included mail fraud and making false financial entries and statements. One juror said later that Clinton's testimony for the defense had no bearing on their decision to convict his former business partners.

Tucker, 52, who succeeded Clinton as governor, was convicted of conspiracy and mail fraud in real estate development schemes that eventually helped destroy McDougal's S&L association. "I'm sure they tried to do the right thing," Tucker said of the jurors. "As it happens, they just did the wrong thing."

The three defendants face years in jail and fines amounting to millions of dollars. They vowed to appeal.

Clinton told reporters at the White House he was saddened by the convictions of his longtime Arkansas friends and former business partners, who had called him to the witness stand to knock down the testimony of the chief prosecution witness. The president sidestepped a question about his credibility as a defense witness, saying that question should be directed to jurors, not him.

The convictions could not have been more timely or cumulatively powerful for Starr, a Republican who has been criticized for his conduct of the investigation, especially by Democratic partisans. The result also represented a vindication for a sometimes risky prosecution strategy of drowning the jury with documentary evidence, in this case more than 600 exhibits.



Bill Clinton meets reporters last week after former associates were found guilty in the Whitewater trial PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL RICHARDS

By contrast, jurors said, the defense presented almost no case, other than the testimony of the president and James McDougal. "I can't understand why they rested so quickly," said one alternate juror.

In Washington, a beaming Starr told reporters he was "obviously gratified" by the trial's outcome and alluded to a home-court advantage that never materialized for the defendants, calling the convictions "a tribute to the people of Arkansas."

The subtext of the trial, so strongly flavored by Arkansas politics and the election-year struggle between national Democrats and Republicans, was the contest between Starr and the Clinton White House. As independent counsel, Starr had broad prosecutorial powers and grand juries to help him unravel the go-go real estate deals that transformed Little Rock while Clinton was governor in the mid-1980s.

Clinton faced no criminal charges in this trial, but the White House clearly did not relish the idea of a jury's branding his Whitewater partners as crooks at the very moment the president geared up his reelection campaign.

Although the trial centered on a complex loan-swapping scheme, it touched on the Whitewater real estate development, in which the Clintons and McDougals were partners. Prosecution witness David Hale testified that Clinton, as governor, asked him to approve an illegal $300,000 loan to Susan McDougal. About $50,000 of the proceeds of that loan went into a Whitewater account.

Clinton, in videotaped testimony played in court, heatedly denied that he urged Hale to make the loan. Risa Gayle Briggs, a 41-year schoolteacher who sat on the jury, said the panel did not try to decide whether Clinton or Hale was telling the truth. Clinton's name "was brought up maybe once in passing," she said. "The president's testimony had nothing to do with the transactions we were honing in on and discussing.

"We had enough credible witnesses that we didn't have to rely on Clinton or Hale," she said. "We drew diagrams, we story-webbed it out, we did a time line, we went over everything with a fine-tooth comb."

In Washington, Republican members of Congress said the verdicts legitimize the congressional inquiries into Whitewater.

Free Press Is Key to Healthy Opposition in the Balkans

COMMENT
Kati Morton

THEY don't shoot reporters — or even jail them anymore — in postwar former Yugoslavia. Today the authoritarian governments of the Balkans use more subtle measures to control the media.

After a 10-day fact-finding trip to Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb and talks with the leaders of all three countries, I am convinced a healthy democratic opposition will not take root here without stronger Western pressure on Serb, Croatian and Bosnian leaders. All three leaders — Slobodan Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic — promised to uphold the right to free speech and free press in Dayton, but all three are falling far short of delivering on that promise.

The Balkan media's plight goes much further than the issue of the population's legitimate rights of free speech and free press. It was the media in Belgrade, Zagreb and, to a much lesser degree, Sarajevo that fueled the ethnic passions that unleashed the war. It is now essential for the security of Europe and the United States that we insist on the establishment of free media in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia.

The situation is most critical in Bosnia. In September, elections will be held that will anchor the fragile entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina to a new central government. Without a free press, the dream of reviving a multiethnic society after years of savage violence will fade. Although the guns that killed 45 reporters during the war are quiet now, it is still too dangerous for Bosnian journalists to cover more than a sliver of the country. The brave ones who try come back shaken from the experience, with stories of being pulled off the road when Serb militia loyal to the indicted war criminal who still leads the Bosnia Serbs — Radovan Karadzic — spotted their Sarajevo plates and hauled them in for "questioning."

In Bosnia, as elsewhere, television is how most people get their news. What limited television exists is under the control of President Izetbegovic's ruling party. This makes it difficult for opposition candidates such as former prime minister Haris Silajdic to get their message out in the election campaign. Ironically, Radio Free Europe, deemed a relic of the Cold War and never before heard in Yugoslavia, has become the most popular radio in Bosnia — as close as most people think they'll get to the straight story.

In Belgrade and Zagreb, independent media are controlled by the use of "financial police": government accountants who swoop down on opposition press and find their bookkeeping wanting. On April 25, such "accountants" swept into the office of the Croatian weekly Panorama and ordered all staff to leave in 15 minutes. The magazine remains shut. The reason: alleged "failure to meet technical, health and ecological standards necessary for operating."

When I asked President Tudjman why his government is suing another independent paper, Novi List, for a ruinous sum, he ordered an aide to fetch the cover of the satiric weekly, Feral Tribune, which featured Tudjman's face atop Rambo's body. "Would any other world leader put up with this?" he asked. "All leaders in democracies," I replied, but without much effect on him.

Another technique both Milosevic and Tudjman use to quiet dissent is to claim that formerly state-controlled media were "improperly privatized." Using that device, Serbian police entered Belgrade's Studio B and pulled the plug. Now all Serb television is under Milosevic's control. But Milosevic assured me, revealingly, that he has instructed the media to damp down their former anti-Muslim and anti-Croat fervor and get behind the Dayton Accords.

Milosevic also controls newsprint, and thus manipulates the independent dailies' circulation. Nasa Borba, the only major independent daily in Serbia, struggles to reach more than 10,000 readers, whereas Politika, the pro-Milosevic paper, never suffers from a newsprint shortage and reaches 300,000.

But there are many pressure points. Serbia badly wants the remaining sanctions lifted. Bosnia as well as Serbia and Croatia, need Western investment, IMF loans, European Union membership and respectability. A price must be exacted for all those things, and part of that price should be the ingredient that separates a democracy from other forms of government: a free press.

Kati Marton is chair of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Don't Let the Sneerites Win the Election

OPINION
E.J. Dionne, Jr.

THERE'S a new set of ideas out that's rapidly overtaking liberalism and conservatism. It's the politics of sneering. The Sneerites don't take politicians or their ideas seriously at all. That's no fun. They just sneer at the whole crowd, tell you in luscious detail what a bunch of boobs they are and leave it at that.

Now even Anti-Sneerites have to concede that politicians give the Sneerites a lot of material to work with. Politicians can get pompous, arrogant and self-righteous. They should be laughed at often. But laughter is importantly different from sneering. Think of laughter as democratic and sneering as elitist.

The extent to which all of us have been touched by the politics of sneering was brought home to me by a conversation with Sam Beer, a distinguished political scientist in his mid-80s. Beer has not only written wisely about politics. He's been in the midst of it, starting out as a speechwriter for Franklin Roosevelt.

Beer said the most subversive and unfashionable thing I've heard all year: The country is lucky to have a choice between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. Clinton has been a rather good president and has a reasonable grasp of the problems facing contemporary liberalism. Dole was distinguished in World War II, is practical and not extreme and has usually put his sense of national interest over immediate partisan concerns in foreign policy.

Think of the choice Russian voters face in their election. They can retain the failed Yeltsin administration. Or they can accept the unacceptable and put the old Communists back in power. It's enough to make you write Clinton and Dole thank you notes.

Now don't sneer. The point here is not that Dole and Clinton are superhuman, they are politicians. That's what most of the great presidents were before big events thrust greatness upon them. The truly great — think of Lincoln and FDR — dealt well with the big events not because they were above politics but precisely because they were canny politicians, a canniness often denigrated by their contemporaries.

None of this would be surprising but for our inability to do much more than sneer when the word "politician" is tossed into a sentence. And here's the real problem: All of us have a powerful interest in sneering and don't know how to stop.

Politicians themselves do it all the time. They say far nastier things about each other than journalists ever do. In ads and speeches it's far easier to denigrate an unpopular individual than to come to terms with what they stand for. Any politician who blames public cynicism on the press should be locked in a room and required to watch five consecutive hours of negative television ads.

Sneering is indeed a popular option for journalists. Say a nice word about a politician and you will be denounced for being "in the tank." Hold back on a charge because you think it should be checked out more and you risk running way behind the pack. But sneer at a politician and you're praised as a courageous hero who "tells truth to power." Sneer and the world sneers with you. Praise and you praise alone.

And sneering is a great choice for voters, too. Sneering passes as a radical stance because it says to hell with them all. In fact, it's the passive option, and ultimately reactionary. It requires no action and little thought. It blames all problems on politicians, leaving just about everybody else — ourselves notably — off the hook.

But no one has more power to stop the sneering than Clinton and Dole do. As it is, they are giving the Sneerites all the ammunition they need. Dole sneers at Clinton for his draft record and his campaign touts an open-necked shirt as if it were a brilliant policy breakthrough.

So, I admit it, I can sneer, too. But I don't like doing it, and my suspicion is that most voters don't like it either. Clinton and Dole have a right to be taken seriously. If that's what they want, they can start by taking each other and the process over which they have temporary stewardship seriously. If they don't, the Sneerites will win yet another election.

Is Cultural Diversity Costing Canada Dear?

Charles Trueheart in Toronto

BEFORE anything else happens every morning at Applewood Heights Secondary School, the public-address system crackles to life with the lilting voices of a choir singing "O Canada."

Teachers in the noisy corridors bark "Stand still!" The students comply, falling silent and offering a freeze-frame of the Canadian future: Skin color comes in every hue from pink to chocolate. Asian eyes abound. A few boys wear the topknots of adolescent Sikhs. Three brown-eyed girls stand in their floor-length silks and modest head scarves. When the national anthem is done, a white Canadian teacher offers them an Islamic greeting.

Applewood Heights, a virtually all-white, English-speaking suburban high school two decades ago, today is a place where scores of cultures, ethnicities and languages swim together. A third of its 1,500 students were born outside Canada, and nearly 40 percent first learned a language other than English. Little more than a third are of European ancestry. Almost half are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, from somewhere in Asia.

Applewood Heights looks a lot like Toronto. It offers a glimpse of a generation of new Canadians who have grown up under one of the world's more welcoming immigration policies, and one of the more aggressive programs of promoting and preserving immigrant heritage.

Twenty-five years ago, well before other Western countries, the Canadian government adopted the concept of multiculturalism. The objective was a "mosaic," a multi-hued collection of distinctive identities, in contrast to the traditional American preference to stir immigrants into a "melting pot."

To help meet the objective, federally financed and locally administered programs range from settlement services and legal aid to "ethno-specific" business associations and summer street festivals. The official rhetoric of multiculturalism and government largess have sent a message of respect to newly arrived immigrants and refugees — and to prospective ones the world over.

Strains on Canada's extensive medical and social safety net and a changing political climate have driven the total Canadian take of immigrants downward from 250,000 a year to 220,000. But at 1 percent, that is still the highest proportion of population of any Western country except Sweden.

Canada has an insignificant illegal-immigrant problem compared with the United States — in part because of the relative ease of legal entry. But many Canadians have begun to wonder about the costs of that approach. Persistent unemployment and deep cuts in basic social services have made multiculturalism seem to many like a luxury.

Some also question the premise of the luxury. Intellectuals and politicians debate whether multiculturalism breeds isolation and fragmentation at a time when Canada is struggling to maintain unity in the face of secessionist sentiments in Quebec.

Looming over these questions is the test of the philosophy itself: In the schools and on the streets where multiculturalism is so visible, cultural, ethnic and linguistic identities feel the powerful pull of acculturation into Canada and the rest of North America.

THAT dynamic, and the Canadian and American immigrant experience over the long haul, raise the question: Is the mosaic ultimately a way station to the melting pot?

Much of small-town and rural Canada remains all white. But Toronto, Canada's largest city, has long since shed the image and the reality of stolid white Englishness. It is the top destination of immigrants to a country where one in five citizens was born elsewhere. Its diversity is impossible to overlook.

Drivers' tests are given in 12 languages, and social services are provided in dozens more. Street signs and local advertising come in English and Portuguese, or Tamil, or Greek, or Vietnamese. Toronto does not have one Chinatown; it has five or six — including huge suburban malls catering almost exclusively to Asian customers.

Canada's French-speaking province, Quebec, is a special case. But in its midst, too, in Montreal, thrives a multicultural and often trilingual population deliberately drawn, through immigration and language laws, from parts of the world where educated élites often speak French, such as Haiti, Zaire and Vietnam.

As families will, however, this one sometimes feuds. Canada's former secretary of state for multicultural affairs, Sheila Finestone, stirred a major brouhaha last year by stating that Canada had "no national culture" but instead was characterized by the coexistence of many cultures.

That is just the problem, in the view of novelist Neil Bissoondath, a native of Trinidad who lives in Toronto. Bissoondath stirred a hornet's nest with a recent non-fiction book, Selling Illusions: The Myth Of Canadian Multiculturalism, that rejected most of the pieties of the last quarter-century. It earned him the derision of Trudeau-era liberals and cultural-community leaders. Multiculturism, Bisoondath contends, "has highlighted our differences rather than diminished them."

True to immigrant patterns in the United States and elsewhere, many Canadians whose families have been here a generation or more make a resentful connection between newer immigrants and economic insecurities. Ontario's unemployment rate is 9 percent. A 1994 Angus Reid poll found that nearly half of all Canadians thought "too many immigrants" were admitted.

Sharmini Peries, executive director of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, said economic stress "seems to legitimize racism. It gives people who have racist ideology more confidence to put it in the open." So has the rise of a new conservative party in the Canadian West, Reform, that has called for drastically reduced immigration levels.

Recent research, however, suggests that Canada's 5 million foreign-born residents are no more responsible for Canada's troubles than the 24 million native-born ones, and even somewhat less so.

Ather H. Akbari of St. Mary's University in Halifax concluded in 1994 that immigrant households in Canada paid more in taxes than the value of the tax-financed public services they used. An Alberta study found that the foreign-born are less dependent on unemployment and social assistance than non-immigrants of their age group.

In any case, there is more than nobility behind Canada's embrace of newcomers. Immigrants and refugees keep this vast, thinly populated country from losing population. Immigrants contribute to the tax base and the job pool and open lucrative commercial lines to their home countries.

Gene Tests Raise Spectre Of DNA Discrimination

Rick Weiss

NEW genetic tests marketed as ways of predicting cancer could lead to discrimination against some people for health insurance on the basis of their DNA.

As companies begin to market their new tests for breast and bowel cancer, as well as Alzheimer's disease, scientists, patients' groups and health insurers are rushing to stake out positions on what restrictions, if any, should be placed on the commercialisation of genetic tests. The strained positions some are taking reveal the extent to which science is intermingled with politics and business.

Congress, for example, is preparing legislation that would prohibit genetic discrimination against some people — but not against others. The Food and Drug Administration, on the defensive amid corporate claims of over-regulation, has declared it has the authority to regulate genetic tests but hastens to add that it has no plans to do so. And in perhaps the most unusual twist, many advocates of patients' rights who usually clamour for access to the latest cancer breakthroughs are asking that some genetic tests be kept from patients.

The stakes are high on both sides. The fledgling genetic testing industry, which forsees soaring profits, is pushing hard to get its tests to market. Similarly, insurers desperately want to peek at their clients' genes to help predict their medical fates — and to set their insurance rates accordingly.

On the other hand, many scientists, doctors and patients' groups argue that, at least for now, most gene testing should be limited to research studies, which could keep track of how people with various "bad" genes actually fare over the years.

With these concerns in mind, several top scientific organisations have come out against commercialisation of the BRCA1 test, the first crude predicter of cancer risk to come on the market.

Many genetic tests — especially those for rare diseases — can predict with certainty a person's fate. Everyone who tests positive for genetic defect associated with Huntington's disease, for example, will get the fatal neurodegenerative disease, probably in midlife. But other tests — especially for cancers and Alzheimer's disease — offer far less definite predictions.

Congress could make it illegal for insurers and employers to discriminate on the basis of genetic information. Both the House and Senate versions of health care bill contain language that would prohibit some forms of genetic discrimination.

They would preclude companies from using genetic information to deny an insured person continued insurance when that person changes health plans. But they offer little or no protection to people who do not yet have insurance and are trying to get it. And other safeguards are far from complete.

According to many experts, the last hope for intelligent guidance on the gene-testing issue may be a federal task force convened last year. Made up of representatives from the medical profession, the testing and insurance industries and patients' rights groups, it is preparing a report on the ethical and legal implications of genetic testing, due by the end of the year.

Three Guilty in Fraud Trial

R.H. Melton and
Michael Haddigan

A FEDERAL jury handed Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr a decisive victory in Little Rock, Arkansas, last week by convicting two of President Clinton's former business partners and Democratic Governor Jim Guy Tucker of nearly all the fraud and conspiracy charges Starr lodged against them 10 months ago.

Tucker, now in his second term, promptly announced his resignation, saying he will leave office by July 15.

The jury of nine women and three men ended the three-month-long trial by convicting James B. McDougal, who once owned a Little Rock savings and loan association, of 18 charges of conspiracy and fraud.

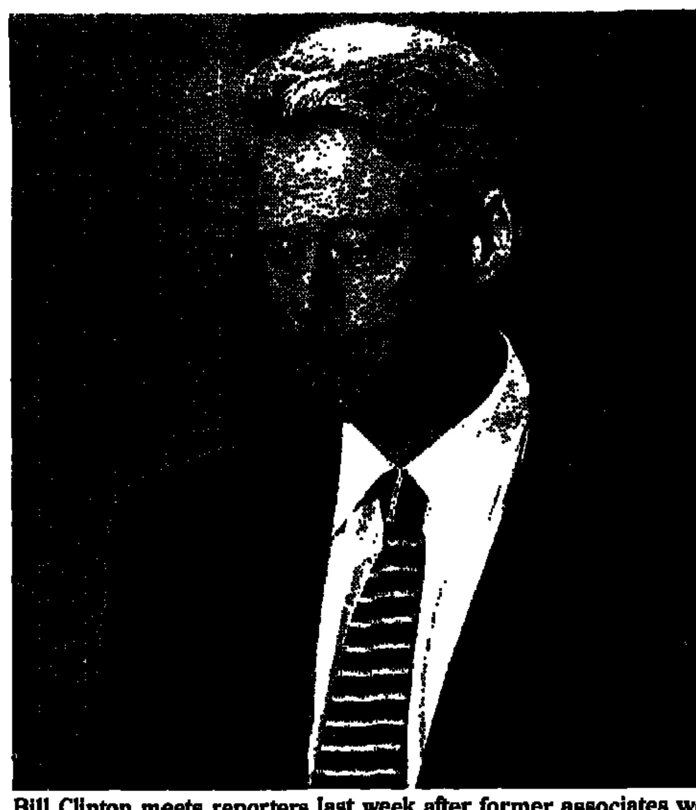
McDougal's former wife, Susan, who some courtroom observers believed would be acquitted because of her lesser role in the fraudulent transactions, was convicted on all four charges against her, which included mail fraud and making false financial entries and statements. One juror said later that Clinton's testimony for the defense had no bearing on their decision to convict his former business partners.

Tucker, 52, who succeeded Clinton as governor, was convicted of conspiracy and mail fraud in real estate development schemes that eventually helped destroy McDougal's S&L association. "I'm sure they tried to do the right thing," Tucker said of the jurors. "As it happens, they just did the wrong thing."

The three defendants face years in jail and fines amounting to millions of dollars. They vowed to appeal.

Clinton told reporters at the White House he was saddened by the convictions of his longtime Arkansas friends and former business partners, who had called him to the witness stand to knock down the testimony of the chief prosecution witness. The president sidestepped a question about his credibility as a defense witness, saying that question should be directed to jurors, not him.

The convictions could not have been more timely or cumulatively powerful for Starr, a Republican who has been criticized for his conduct of the investigation, especially by Democratic partisans. The result also represented a vindication for a sometimes risky prosecution strategy of drowning the jury with documentary evidence, in this case more than 600 exhibits.



Bill Clinton meets reporters last week after former associates were found guilty in the Whitewater trial PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL RICHARDS

By contrast, jurors said, the defense presented almost no case, other than the testimony of the president and James McDougal. "I can't understand why they rested so quickly," said one alternate juror.

In Washington, a beaming Starr told reporters he was "obviously gratified" by the trial's outcome and alluded to a home-court advantage that never materialized for the defendants, calling the convictions "a tribute to the people of Arkansas."

The subtext of the trial, so strongly flavored by Arkansas politics and the election-year struggle between national Democrats and Republicans, was the contest between Starr and the Clinton White House. As independent counsel, Starr had broad prosecutorial powers and grand juries to help him unravel the go-go real estate deals that transformed Little Rock while Clinton was governor in the mid-1980s.

Clinton faced no criminal charges in this trial, but the White House clearly did not relish the idea of a jury's branding his Whitewater partners as crooks at the very moment the president geared up his reelection campaign.

Although the trial centered on a complex loan-swapping scheme, it touched on the Whitewater real estate development, in which the Clintons and McDougals were partners. Prosecution witness David Hale testified that Clinton, as governor, asked him to approve an illegal $300,000 loan to Susan McDougal. About $50,000 of the proceeds of that loan went into a Whitewater account.

Clinton, in videotaped testimony played in court, heatedly denied that he urged Hale to make the loan. Risa Gayle Briggs, a 41-year schoolteacher who sat on the jury, said the panel did not try to decide whether Clinton or Hale was telling the truth. Clinton's name "was brought up maybe once in passing," she said. "The president's testimony had nothing to do with the transactions we were honing in on and discussing.

"We had enough credible witnesses that we didn't have to rely on Clinton or Hale," she said. "We drew diagrams, we story-webbed it out, we did a time line, we went over everything with a fine-tooth comb."

In Washington, Republican members of Congress said the verdicts legitimize the congressional inquiries into Whitewater.

Free Press Is Key to Healthy Opposition in the Balkans

COMMENT
Kati Morton

THEY don't shoot reporters — or even jail them anymore — in postwar former Yugoslavia. Today the authoritarian governments of the Balkans use more subtle measures to control the media.

After a 10-day fact-finding trip to Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb and talks with the leaders of all three countries, I am convinced a healthy democratic opposition will not take root here without stronger Western pressure on Serb, Croatian and Bosnian leaders. All three leaders — Slobodan Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic — promised to uphold the right to free speech and free press in Dayton, but all three are falling far short of delivering on that promise.

The Balkan media's plight goes much further than the issue of the population's legitimate rights of free speech and free press. It was the media in Belgrade, Zagreb and, to a much lesser degree, Sarajevo that fueled the ethnic passions that unleashed the war. It is now essential for the security of Europe and the United States that we insist on the establishment of free media in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia.

The situation is most critical in Bosnia. In September, elections will be held that will anchor the fragile entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina to a new central government. Without a free press, the dream of reviving a multiethnic society after years of savage violence will fade. Although the guns that killed 45 reporters during the war are quiet now, it is still too dangerous for Bosnian journalists to cover more than a sliver of the country. The brave ones who try come back shaken from the experience, with stories of being pulled off the road when Serb militia loyal to the indicted war criminal who still leads the Bosnia Serbs — Radovan Karadzic — spotted their Sarajevo plates and hauled them in for "questioning."

In Bosnia, as elsewhere, television is how most people get their news. What limited television exists is under the control of President Izetbegovic's ruling party. This makes it difficult for opposition candidates such as former prime minister Haris Silajdic to get their message out in the election campaign. Ironically, Radio Free Europe, deemed a relic of the Cold War and never before heard in Yugoslavia, has become the most popular radio in Bosnia — as close as most people think they'll get to the straight story.

In Belgrade and Zagreb, independent media are controlled by the use of "financial police": government accountants who swoop down on opposition press and find their bookkeeping wanting. On April 25, such "accountants" swept into the office of the Croatian weekly Panorama and ordered all staff to leave in 15 minutes. The magazine remains shut. The reason: alleged "failure to meet technical, health and ecological standards necessary for operating."

When I asked President Tudjman why his government is suing another independent paper, Novi List, for a ruinous sum, he ordered an aide to fetch the cover of the satiric weekly, Feral Tribune, which featured Tudjman's face atop Rambo's body. "Would any other world leader put up with this?" he asked. "All leaders in democracies," I replied, but without much effect on him.

Another technique both Milosevic and Tudjman use to quiet dissent is to claim that formerly state-controlled media were "improperly privatized." Using that device, Serbian police entered Belgrade's Studio B and pulled the plug. Now all Serb television is under Milosevic's control. But Milosevic assured me, revealingly, that he has instructed the media to damp down their former anti-Muslim and anti-Croat fervor and get behind the Dayton Accords.

Milosevic also controls newsprint, and thus manipulates the independent dailies' circulation. Nasa Borba, the only major independent daily in Serbia, struggles to reach more than 10,000 readers, whereas Politika, the pro-Milosevic paper, never suffers from a newsprint shortage and reaches 300,000.

But there are many pressure points. Serbia badly wants the remaining sanctions lifted. Bosnia as well as Serbia and Croatia, need Western investment, IMF loans, European Union membership and respectability. A price must be exacted for all those things, and part of that price should be the ingredient that separates a democracy from other forms of government: a free press.

Kati Marton is chair of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Don't Let the Sneerites Win the Election

OPINION
E.J. Dionne, Jr.

THERE'S a new set of ideas out that's rapidly overtaking liberalism and conservatism. It's the politics of sneering. The Sneerites don't take politicians or their ideas seriously at all. That's no fun. They just sneer at the whole crowd, tell you in luscious detail what a bunch of boobs they are and leave it at that.

Now even Anti-Sneerites have to concede that politicians give the Sneerites a lot of material to work with. Politicians can get pompous, arrogant and self-righteous. They should be laughed at often. But laughter is importantly different from sneering. Think of laughter as democratic and sneering as elitist.

The extent to which all of us have been touched by the politics of sneering was brought home to me by a conversation with Sam Beer, a distinguished political scientist in his mid-80s. Beer has not only written wisely about politics. He's been in the midst of it, starting out as a speechwriter for Franklin Roosevelt,

Beer said the most subversive and unfashionable thing I've heard all year: The country is lucky to have a choice between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. Clinton has been a rather good president and has a reasonable grasp of the problems facing contemporary liberalism. Dole was distinguished in World War II, is practical and not extreme and has usually put his sense of national interest over immediate partisan concerns in foreign policy.

Think of the choice Russian voters face in their election. They can retain the failed Yeltsin administration. Or they can accept the unacceptable and put the old Communists back in power. It's enough to make you write Clinton and Dole thank you notes.

Now don't sneer. The point here is not that Dole and Clinton are superhuman, they are politicians. That's what most of the great presidents were before big events thrust greatness upon them. The truly great — think of Lincoln and FDR — dealt well with the big events not because they were above politics but precisely because they were canny politicians, a canniness often denigrated by their contemporaries.

None of this would be surprising but for our inability to do much more than sneer when the word "politician" is tossed into a sentence. And here's the real problem: All of us have a powerful interest in sneering and don't know how to stop.

Politicians themselves do it all the time. They say far nastier things about each other than journalists ever do. In ads and speeches it's far easier to denigrate an unpopular individual than to come to terms with what they stand for. Any politician who blames public cynicism on the press should be locked in a room and required to watch five consecutive hours of negative television ads.

Sneering is indeed a popular option for journalists. Say a nice word about a politician and you will be denounced for being "in the tank." Hold back on a charge because you think it should be checked out more and you risk running way behind the pack. But sneer at a politician and you're praised as a courageous hero who "tells truth to power." Sneer and the world sneers with you. Praise and you praise alone.

And sneering is a great choice for voters, too. Sneering passes as a radical stance because it says to hell with them all. In fact, it's the passive option, and ultimately reactionary. It requires no action and little thought. It blames all problems on politicians, leaving just about everybody else — ourselves notably — off the hook.

But no one has more power to stop the sneering than Clinton and Dole do. As it is, they are giving the Sneerites all the ammunition they need. Dole sneers at Clinton for his draft record and his campaign touts an open-necked shirt as if it were a brilliant policy breakthrough.

So, I admit it, I can sneer, too. But I don't like doing it, and my suspicion is that most voters don't like it either. Clinton and Dole have a right to be taken seriously. If that's what they want, they can start by taking each other and the process over which they have temporary stewardship seriously. If they don't, the Sneerites will win yet another election.

Is Cultural Diversity Costing Canada Dear?

Charles Trueheart in Toronto

BEFORE anything else happens every morning at Applewood Heights Secondary School, the public-address system crackles to life with the lilting voices of a choir singing "O Canada."

Teachers in the noisy corridors bark "Stand still!" The students comply, falling silent and offering a freeze-frame of the Canadian future: Skin color comes in every hue from pink to chocolate. Asian eyes abound. A few boys wear the topknots of adolescent Sikhs. Three brown-eyed girls stand in their floor-length silks and modest head scarves. When the national anthem is done, a white Canadian teacher offers them an Islamic greeting.

Applewood Heights, a virtually all-white, English-speaking suburban high school two decades ago, today is a place where scores of cultures, ethnicities and languages swim together. A third of its 1,500 students were born outside Canada, and nearly 40 percent first learned a language other than English. Little more than a third are of European ancestry. Almost half are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, from somewhere in Asia.

Applewood Heights looks a lot like Toronto. It offers a glimpse of a generation of new Canadians who have grown up under one of the world's more welcoming immigration policies, and one of the more aggressive programs of promoting and preserving immigrant heritage.

Twenty-five years ago, well before other Western countries, the Canadian government adopted the concept of multiculturalism. The objective was a "mosaic," a multi-hued collection of distinctive identities, in contrast to the traditional American preference to stir immigrants into a "melting pot."

To help meet the objective, federally financed and locally administered programs range from settlement services and legal aid to "ethno-specific" business associations and summer street festivals. The official rhetoric of multiculturalism and government largess have sent a message of respect to newly arrived immigrants and refugees — and to prospective ones the world over.

Strains on Canada's extensive medical and social safety net and a changing political climate have driven the total Canadian take of immigrants downward from 250,000 a year to 220,000. But at 1 percent, that is still the highest proportion of population of any Western country except Sweden.

Canada has an insignificant illegal-immigrant problem compared with the United States — in part because of the relative ease of legal entry. But many Canadians have begun to wonder about the costs of that approach. Persistent unemployment and deep cuts in basic social services have made multiculturalism seem to many like a luxury.

Some also question the premise of the luxury. Intellectuals and politicians debate whether multiculturalism breeds isolation and fragmentation at a time when Canada is struggling to maintain unity in the face of secessionist sentiments in Quebec.

Looming over these questions is the test of the philosophy itself: In the schools and on the streets where multiculturalism is so visible, cultural, ethnic and linguistic identities feel the powerful pull of acculturation into Canada and the rest of North America.

THAT dynamic, and the Canadian and American immigrant experience over the long haul, raise the question: Is the mosaic ultimately a way station to the melting pot?

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As families will, however, this one sometimes feuds. Canada's former secretary of state for multicultural affairs, Sheila Finestone, stirred a major brouhaha last year by stating that Canada had "no national culture" but instead was characterized by the coexistence of many cultures.

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Gene Tests Raise Spectre Of DNA Discrimination

Rick Weiss

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Coming Out of the Shadows

Anthony Olcott

SPIES WITHOUT CLOAKS
The KGB's Successors
By Amy Knight
Princeton University Press. 318pp. $24.95

NOW THAT the euphoria of early post-communism is abating, even casual observers know that Russia's "report card" on the eve of its fifth anniversary is decidedly mixed: Russian zillionaires build villas on the Mediterranean, but old people die of cold and hunger, their pensions unpaid; Russia has freely elected two parliaments, but one was closed by Boris Yeltsin's tanks, while its successor has proven largely impotent because of constitutional changes imposed by Yeltsin; a presidential campaign is under way, but there are widespread accusations that the winner is a foregone conclusion; freedom of the press has become a vigorous habit, yet public opinion can do nothing to stop the bloody and endless war which the government is waging against its own citizens in Chechnya.

What is documented by Amy Knight's meticulous study, however, is that "free Russia" is even more of a fiction than most of us might have supposed, beginning with the attempted coup which created Yeltsin's image as the "democrat on the tank." Knight convincingly argues that the attempted coup of August 1991 was little more than elaborate political theater, in which Gorbachev, Yeltsin and the other actors played tightly scripted parts.

A major author of that script, or so Knight implies, was Russia's security forces, the focus of her book. Alone of all major Soviet institutions, the KGB and its successors have survived the transition to independent Russia with their enormous powers all but unchanged.

Indeed, as Knight documents, the successors of the KGB have actually increased, in both number and reach, since the birth of independent Russia.

The KGB has now fissioned into five separate agencies in Russia alone. There are also security agencies and ministries in the 14 other ex-Soviet states, most of them still staffed by people who have at least personal allegiances, if not more, to their colleagues in what now are foreign states.

To be sure, there have been some changes; shrinking state revenues have crimped security budgets, while public hostility to the KGB has spawned some efforts to reform that vast bureaucracy. However, in Knight's recounting, the KGB's heirs appear now to be even more vigorous than was their parent; budgetary woes have been offset by the movement of former KGB personnel (and many sub-agencies) into lucrative businesses, while half-hearted parliamentary attempts to establish civilian oversight of the Federal Security Service, heir to the domestic surveillance functions of the KGB, were easily stopped. Under Evgeni Primakov (now foreign minister), the portfolio of the Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS), heir to the KGB's foreign intelligence branch, has even expanded to include formation of Russia's foreign policy.

What Spies Without Cloaks does not try to explain, however, is what ends Russian policy now serve or the principles which shape it. For all the mystery which surrounded the old KGB, we know at least that its army of agents, informants and enthusiasts worked for the leadership of the Communist Party, maintaining and extending Soviet authority. The collapse of communism has brought no replacement ideology, and so we have no statement of the ends toward which Russia's new security forces are really working or for whom.



ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

Knight argues that strengthening democracy and encouraging the development of rule by law in Russia are no more the goals of the KGB's successors than they were of the KGB. She also suggests strongly that the allegiances of most, or perhaps all, of the KGB's successors are, first, to their own preservation and then to individuals such as Boris Yeltsin, rather than to such abstractions of citizenship as the office of president.

Even more unsettling, Knight suggests that Russia's new security forces are not only continuing the same kinds of skulduggery as they undertook in the past — examples cited include the murders of a newspaper editor and a Helsinki Watch monitor — but are now also expertly manipulating public opinion in Russia and the rest of the world to obscure and disguise what they do.

What Knight suggests, in sum, is that the old client-master relationship between Russia's elite and the KGB has not only been reversed but may even have vanished, because these "children of the KGB" have subsumed large chunks of Russia's economy and government.

If Spies Without Cloaks is correct, much of Russia today is little more than a mutant KGB, the communist ideology it once served now replaced by ruthless devotion to great-power politics and bottom-line capitalism. That possibility is so disquieting that it is tempting to wish that Knight had allowed her book also to step beyond sober analysis and so suggest ways in which America might respond to a Russia which remains clutched by these offspring of the KGB.

Anthony Olcott, associate professor of Russian at Colgate University, is writing a book about Russian crime and detective novels.

On the Shifting Sands of Time

Thomas W. Lippman

THE MIDDLE EAST
A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years
By Bernard Lewis
Scribner. 448pp. $30

ANYONE with more than a passing interest in the Middle East can be assumed to have read certain landmark books about the region's history and culture. Lists might vary, but most would probably include Albert Hourani's history of the Arabs, Lord Kinross's chronicle The Ottoman Centuries, P.J. Vatikiotis's history of modern Egypt and The Arab Awakening, the classic treatise on the rebirth of Arab nationalism by George Antonius.

The question presented by Bernard Lewis's new history of the Middle East, then, is, who needs it? Why would anyone familiar with the region's dynastic histories and the rise of Islam need to read a new survey of these familiar events?

Lewis, professor emeritus at Princeton and probably this country's most renowned scholar of the Middle East, has the qualities it takes to readdress the questions: a disciplined elegance in his prose, an encyclopedic knowledge that enables him to illuminate the links between events separated by hundreds of years and thousands of miles, and a unique ability to relate contemporary events to the region's bloodstained past.

The result is a brilliantly conceived and valuable work that makes two fundamental points: Everything that happens from Afghanistan to Morocco has parallels and precedents in the past; and the struggle between Islam and the West is all but over. Islam loses, and has been losing since the Ottomans were compelled to sign the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699.

Readers who thought the Iranian revolution of 1979 or the more recent fundamentalist challenge in Algeria represented a resurgence of Islam will see them reevaluated here as mere spasmodic twitches of a vanquished culture. Not inferior, necessarily, but vanquished, by superior Western firepower and by the inability of Muslim societies to generate and adopt new ideas that would offer resistance to Western cultural inroads.

Lewis chronicles the rise of Islam from its humble beginnings in the 7th century to its apogee in the Middle Ages and its greatest triumph in the seizure of Constantinople from the disintegrating Byzantine empire in 1453.

But then he offers multiple and persuasive explanations of the decline of Muslim power in relation to Europe that set in shortly afterward and has continued almost without interruption for 550 years.

With resources from the New World, the Europeans had the wealth needed to sustain military campaigns against the Ottomans. The larger, stronger ships they built for ocean voyages overcame an Ottoman fleet designed for the Mediterranean. Islamic indifference to technology and intellectual innovation allowed the Europeans first to resist and then to decisively turn back the advance of Islam.

"The defeat that was suffered at Vienna [in 1683] and sealed at Carlowitz inaugurated a long period of almost unrelieved Muslim retreat before Christian power," according to Lewis.

Within 50 years of the retreat from Vienna, Lewis recounts, the Ottomans were decorating a new mosque in Istanbul in the Italian baroque style, a cultural capitulation "as startling as would be arabesque decorations in a Gothic cathedral. It is the first sign of faltering self-confidence."

THE PROOFS of Islam's decline are multiple: the ease with which Napoleon's army waltzed into Egypt in 1798, the inability of the Arabs to seize the moment and dictate their own fate when the Ottoman empire dissolved after World War I, the survival of modern Israel, grafted onto the heartland of Islam by the will of the West.

Lewis finds Islam in retreat even in revolutionary Iran, which "claims to be restoring true Islamic government but . . . does so in the form of a written constitution and an elected parliament — neither with any precedent in Islamic doctrine or history."

It is the long twilight struggle against non-Muslim forces, according to Lewis, that accounts for the rage of young Muslim militants today and for past developments such as the widespread Arab sympathy for Nazi Germany. The Arabs' first priority in the 1930s and 1940s was to get the British out of their territory. Therefore, against their own long-term interests, "significant numbers of Arabs favoured the Germans, who sent the Jews to Palestine, rather than the British, who tried to keep them out."

While his narrative is generally chronological, Lewis excels at explaining events as parts of a pattern rather than discrete phenomena. Consider this passage: "By a tragic paradox, only the reinforcement of the state could preserve the cohesion of the community, and the Islamic state, as it grew stronger, was obliged to make many compromises on the social and ethical ideas of Islam." That may sound like an analysis of contemporary Algeria or Pakistan, but it appears in Lewis's account of the early years of the caliphate, in the 8th century.

For another example, Lewis makes clear that Saddam Hussein's seizure of Kuwait in 1990 was not exceptional. Local despots have been doing that sort of thing in the Middle East since time immemorial. The strong attack the weak; the weak survive if it suits the purposes of some powerful protector to save them, as Kuwait was saved in 1991 and Israel was saved in 1973.

In his prologue Lewis observes that histories of the Middle East often begin with the rise of Islam and only note that the Arab armies were able to sweep across the Fertile Crescent and North Africa because Persia and Byzantium had worn themselves out fighting each other. But Lewis devotes considerable time to explaining what the wars between Byzantium and Persia were about, and it turns out that many of the issues were similar to those being played out today in the selection of pipeline routes for Caspian sea oil.

Albert Hourani's A History Of The Arab Peoples is 551 pages long; Ira M. Lapidus's A History Of Islamic Societies is 1,002 pages. In striving for brevity, Lewis is inevitably obliged to shortchange or ignore people and events that might merit longer treatment. The rebellion of the Zanj — a rising of black slaves against the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad in the 9th century, well described in Lewis's earlier works — is all but ignored here. The Baghdad Pact, a crucial development in modern Arab history, is barely mentioned. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser appears only briefly, T.E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") and Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion not at all.

But no scholar has more standing than Lewis to decide what is essential and what is not in attempting to understand the Middle East. Taken as a whole, this work provides an invaluable guide to understanding a critical region of the world where peace seems to break out only when some empire grows powerful enough to impose its will on all communities.

Thomas W. Lippman, a Washington Post diplomatic correspondent, is the author of "Understanding Islam."

France still plays kingmaker in Africa

Jean-Pierre Langellier

TO INTERVENE or not to intervene? That is the question France has faced every time a crisis has blown up in its French-speaking "patch" of Africa in the past 30 years or so. Should it ignore cries for help from this or that leader, or refuse to assist a friendly regime in its time of need?

Or should it help the regime's leaders to regain control of the situation, thus triggering the fury of their opponents? This is an area where the right decision is bound, to some extent, to be the wrong one. In almost all such cases France decides to step in and play at being policeman. But more and more often it does so only reluctantly.

In the case of the recent troop mutiny in the Central African Republic, where the situation has now returned to normal, a policy of non-intervention would have been fraught with danger. First, there was the unacceptable risk of deliberately endangering the lives of the 4,000 or so expatriates (half of them French) who live there. It is the duty of any state to guarantee the safety of its nationals, at home and elsewhere, whenever it is in a position to do so.

Another risk was that fighting between rebel and loyalist forces would degenerate into a civil war of the kind that has recently left a trail of death and destruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

A decision not to intervene would have unnerved the leaders of the 24 African countries bound to France by defence and/or military agreements, which rely on Paris for support and protection if things go wrong.

They could not conceive of France deserting its friends. Seven presidents made their feelings clear at the start, by approving the decision to intervene. In so doing they were clearly sending warning signals to any of their underpaid troops who might have been tempted to rebel and, implicitly, a message of encouragement to all those soldiers who, in these times of austerity and transition to democracy, have suffered a loss of status, prestige and buying power.

Non-intervention in the Central African Republic would, above all, have endangered France's strategic and economic interests in a country which — from a military standpoint — has become its centre of operations in the heart of Africa. Of the 8,000 or so French troops based in seven black African countries, some 1,400 are stationed in the Central African Republic, both in the capital Bangui and in the western town of Bouar.

France decided to intervene because it knew it could influence events. "Africa is the only continent where France, with 500 men, can change the course of history," noted Louis de Guiringaud when he was foreign minister 20 years ago. His remark still holds true.

Paris had another good reason to help President Ange-Félix Patassé. He is the first leader of the Central African Republic to have been more or less fairly elected, in September 1993, with 53 per cent of the vote — the kind of score not often encountered in Africa.

Ever since it first stepped in to restore to power the Gabonese president, Léon M'ba, in 1964, France has regularly intervened in the affairs of independent African states — once every two years on average. It has done so mostly in compliance with existing agreements and at the request of embattled leaders, or else with their blessing, as was the case with the Shaba operation in Zaire in 1977 and 1978.

More recently France has also acted to thwart individual ventures, such as the attempted coup in the Comoros by veteran mercenary Bob Denard in October 1995, or for mainly humanitarian reasons, as in Operation Turquoise in Rwanda 16 months earlier. France's Rwandan excursion earned it a tremendous amount of flak, and government officials admit in private that they would now think twice before organising such an operation again.

The mutineers' spokesman in the Central African Republic, Sergeart Cyriaque Souké (second left), flanked by French soldiers at a base near Bangui following talks with the French army mediator PHOTO: FRANCOIS MORI

One thing is certain: the time has come for France to revise its military agreements in Africa. The vast majority of them were concluded in the wake of independence or, at the latest, in the seventies at a time when black Africa was the theatre of superpower rivalry and France was none too particular about the track record of friendly regimes as long as they stayed on its side.

THOSE agreements, which sometimes comprised secret clauses and were left deliberately ambiguous (where is the dividing line between a country's sovereignty, a regime's stability and a leader's political fate?), allowed France to come to the defence of countries when they were attacked, as in the case of Chad in the eighties. But most of the time such agreements simply enabled leaders and regimes under fire from within to survive.

Even if France's agreements with African states are completely revised they will certainly continue to allow some latitude in their interpretation when it comes to the crunch. France will continue to respond on a one-off basis and judge each request for help on its merits.

It is only to be hoped that each time it has to take such a decision Paris pays more attention than it has in the past to factors directly affecting the peoples concerned, such as the degree to which their leaders govern democratically, competently and honestly. But it would be naive to expect France to overlook its own strategic and commercial interests.

France should strive to dissuade African leaders from regarding military agreements as a form of "life insurance" for themselves. It should also try, in a crisis, to impose a compromise acceptable to all parties — as it did in the Central African Republic. But that means stepping in, negotiating and arbitrating as in the "good old" colonial times. And what guarantee is there that promises made by either side will be kept?

It is far better to prevent crises than to have to deal with them — by, for example, helping African states to put their economies in order, by urging them to behave in a more democratic way, and by tempering assistance and encouragement offered with pressure and vigilance.

But where is the thin line between respecting sovereignty and interfering? It would be unfair to accuse France of intervening too massively in one case (the Central African Republic), not massively enough in another (the aftermath of the January coup in Niger), and too late in a third (Rwanda two years ago).

The worst option probably would be to leave Africa to its own devices and its "bad old" habits — in particular tribalism — or to abandon it to the tender mercies of this or that bunch of disgruntled army officers, thus pushing it further on to the economic sidelines.

Fortunately, that is an unlikely scenario, as France and French-speaking Africa will remain wedded together for some time to come. Their common destiny, cemented by a combination of mutual interests and affection, is embodied not only in the French language, but in many forms of co-operation that involve much more than the mere dispatching of legionaries.

(May 30)

Chile counts cost of its economic 'miracle'

Guy Herzlich in Santiago

CHILE has some enviable natural resources. In 1995 the Canadian group Barrick Gold invested $500 million in its 800 sq km gold-mining concession at El Indio in the heart of the Andes, 300km north of the capital Santiago. That same year, almost half of foreign investment was in the mining sector.

The government intends fully to exploit the country's natural wealth while at the same time steering clear of a development model that is overdependent on raw materials.

Since the mid-eighties, by encouraging inward investment and following a tight fiscal policy, Chile has had 12 years of growth at an average annual rate of 6.5 per cent, a slow but steady fall in inflation, and investment amounting to 28 per cent of GDP. The Chileans have even begun to invest in the economies of neighbouring countries.

Chile's Socialist economy minister, Alvaro Garcia, says he expects 1996 to show an increase in investment and a reduction in unemployment as well as lower inflation.

But the Chilean model has its weak points too. Sixty per cent of exports are still based on natural resources, which are only partly processed at home. Two-thirds of the rise in the value of exports in 1995 was due to increases in the prices of raw material s.

A handful of large companies continue to corner 60 per cent of the export trade. Although economy ministry officials point out that Chilean industry has opened up a number of lucrative niche export markets and developed some sophisticated engineering techniques in mining and forestry, they say they firmly intend to diversify exports.

There is no question of pursuing an "industrial policy", a notion that the neo-liberals who call the tune in Santiago reject as unjustifiable government intrusion in the economy.

Yet the government has been setting up a series of aid programmes for small and medium-sized companies which, it admits, have greater difficulty in innovating, marketing their products and obtaining bank loans. The state helps to finance training and technical assistance programmes, shoulders the extra cost of loans, and pays for the promotion of investments and sales abroad and part of the cost of credit insurance.

If this policy works, it will ensure that the balance of payments remains in equilibrium and that the government's policy of "growth with fairness" is a success.

Employment is a major concern. "Each year 50,000 people leave agriculture," says Garcia. "Other sectors will have to find them jobs." As time goes by, Chile finds itself facing two sets of problems, those of a developing country and those of a long-standing industrialised country.

When he was elected president in March 1994, Eduardo Frei said he was going to give priority to the fight against poverty and announced a "national crusade". That priority is now accepted as a good thing by all levels of society. "As growth continues, it is becoming less and less acceptable that people shold be left in a state of poverty," says José António Guzman, head of Chile's Production and Trade Confederation.

As a result of economic growth and social spending, poverty has decreased appreciably since the return of democracy. Only slightly more than a quarter of the population now lives below the poverty line, as opposed to 40 per cent in 1989.

But in the past two years progress has been slower. The increase in the number of jobs has eased off. It even stopped altogether in 1994: despite a 4.2 per cent rise in gross domestic product, unemployment rose from 4.6 to 5.9 per cent. And the business pick-up in 1995 managed to claw back only half a per cent.

The government has launched a sweeping public-works programme, partly financed by the private sector, which aims to reduce the bottlenecks in the economy caused by inadequate infrastructure.

But Frei may find it difficult to honour his pledge to eliminate what he calls "destitution" — the plight of those without any means of subsistence — by the end of the century. The proportion of people qualifying as destitute was brought down from 14 to 8 per cent in the early nineties, but is no longer decreasing.

The economic transformation has brought a new social problem. The salaries of the highest paid are rising rapidly, while low wages are stagnating. There is an increasing gulf between dynamic sectors of the economy and others, such as traditional farming, old industries, and even sections of the civil service.

"The poor are now less numerous and less poor, but social inequalities are widening," says the Socialist senator Carlos Ominami, who was economy minister under President Patricio Aylwin in the early nineties. That trend is difficult to reconcile with "growth with fairness".

(May 29)

Missing, presumed bullied to death

Marie Jégo in Moscow reveals the deadly terror unleashed on conscripts in the Russian army



Killed in action: relatives mourn the death of a Russian soldier in Chechenia
PHOTOGRAPH: VLADIMIR VELENGURIN

THE tiny office of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in the centre of Moscow is constantly packed with middle-aged women wearing headscarves. They peer anxiously at handwritten notices such as: "Seek eyewitness reports of how my son, Sasha Volkov (Regiment 956013) died in Grozny in February 1996", or "Anyone who saw Private Vitya D (Regiment 875401) being thrown by his comrades from the Moscow-Voronezh night train please contact his family in Moscow with a view to giving evidence".

The Russian "mothers" had begun to mobilise their forces well before the war in Chechenia. In 1989 a group of 10 women, angered by the deaths of their conscript sons "in peacetime", founded the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers.

Lyubov Lymar became their standard-bearer. In 1987 her only son died at the age of 19 when doing his military service, officially as a result of "attempted suicide". When she got his body back, she was shocked to find it showed traces of serious wounds and was headless.

After two years of wrangling with military tribunals, she managed to get a fresh post-mortem report. The culprits were never found, but her son was now described as having "died as a result of ill-treatment". She was given back the missing bits of his body in a cardboard box.

Nina Komkova's conscript son also "committed suicide" in 1992, according to the official version. But she tracked his body down at the morgue, only to find "his genitals cut off, his fingers bitten and a bayonet wound in his back".

While the army admits that each year some 2,000 conscripts die "a violent death in peacetime", the mothers think the true figure is triple that. Many youngsters called up from remote parts of Russia are literally reduced to slavery by older conscripts. The process is known as *dyadovshchina* — the bullying of rookies by *dyadi*, those who have served for a year or more.

One typical soldier's letter reads:

"Dear Mother . . . Shortly after I joined the regiment on October 27 I was beaten up in the canteen by Sergeant R. because he thought I'd given him 'a dirty look'. Next day, although I had got leave for family reasons, I was prevented from leaving by the commander of our battalion because my bruises were too visible. They shut me up for a week on a diet of bread and water. A week later, five of the *dyadi* hit me with their belt buckles because I'd washed the floor of their barrack-room without asking permission. I got hit repeatedly on the head, in the ribs and in the genitals. I passed out."

The practice of *dyadovshchina*, which is talked about increasingly openly, is not new. Some Russian sociologists trace its origins to the eighties, when the army began to allow into its ranks common-law criminals who introduced practices they had learnt in labour camps. Others see the phenomenon as an integral part of Russian society, which is excessively hierarchical.

The committee, which started out as one of those loosely knit "self-defence" organisations that sprang up when Mikhail Gorbachev introduced perestroika, now has 10,000 members as well as offices in most Russian cities. It is run on a shoestring, despite getting some money from the Heinrich Böll Fund in Germany. It provides legal advice, puts out a Guide To Going Absent Without Leave, and fights thousands of cases in the courts.

A Moscow committee veteran, Flora Salikhovskaya, says: "Our movement took on a completely different dimension with the beginning of the war in Chechenia in December 1994. We now get 70-100 calls a day, because families can't always afford to come and see us."

In 1995 the St Petersburg committee got 7,000 appeals for help, according to its chairwoman, Ella Poliakova, mostly from parents of conscripts sent to Chechenia. One soldier wrote to the mothers: "We were told we were going to join the Tamanskaya Division in Moscow. We boarded a plane which landed in Grozny."

At the beginning of the Russian offensive in Chechenia, conscripts were even sent into the front line, closely followed by "élite troops" whose job was to catch any deserters. The promise made a year ago by President Boris Yeltsin and his defence minister, Pavel Grachev, that no more conscripts would be sent to the front has not been kept.

"We have organised the biggest unauthorised kidnapping of soldiers by their mothers — many of the buses going to Chechenia are hired by us," says Salikhovskaya. In the few cases where Chechen separatists refuse to hand over prisoners to parents who come to get them, soldiers' families still have the possibility of staying in villages near where their sons are fighting. In February six families moved to Novogrozny. Little did they know it would shortly be reduced to rubble by Russian planes.

"It's outrageous," says one mother. "The Chechens help us, while our own army kicks us out. A separatist leader called me to tell me he was holding my son. He promised to hand him over if I went to fetch him. He kept his promise, then helped us cross the Russian lines. Better even, he gave us $100 towards the return journey. His fellow soldiers weren't too pleased — they'd have preferred to use the money to buy tobacco, which was in short supply."

PARENTS say the army can be astoundingly callous in its dealings with them. Stanislav Vorontsov had had no news of his son Alexander since his unit was sent to Chechenia in the spring of 1995, so he called the army's freephone service. "At first they said he wasn't on any list, so I needn't worry. 'He'll write to you,' they kept on saying. When I persisted they eventually told me my son must have deserted and would be punished — as indeed I would be if I took him in."

When Vorontsov read in the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets that the bodies of 216 "unidentified" soldiers had been kept for the past year in the morgue of Rostov-on-Don, a city in southern Russia with an important railway junction, Vorontsov travelled there along with many other parents. "We were supposed to recognise the numbered corpses from a film they showed us again and again, but I couldn't see my son."

Vorontsov then went to Mozdok, the Russian army headquarters in northern Ossetia. There he was directed to the nearest military hospital, where his son had been treated after "being wounded by the explosion of a phosphorus incendiary bomb".

"I immediately got the message: phosphorus burns at 5,000°C, so there couldn't have been anything left of my Sasha." He found no trace of his son. When he asked the army for a death certificate, they categorically refused.

Galina Komissarova, from the southern Russian city of Krasnodar, was sent a zinc coffin six months after her son had been sent to Grozny. "But the body inside wasn't my son's," she says. "It was that of a smaller person. I buried the unknown man as was only right and proper, but I'm still waiting for my son."

Such mistakes are common, as only officers carry identity discs.

When soldiers "disappear", families have to contend with more than just grief. Lena's son, Igor, was one of 446 soldiers from his unit in the southwestern city of Maikop who in December 1994 were ordered to enter Grozny and take the railway station. They were surrounded by separatist forces: 84 were killed, 138 wounded and 74 reported missing.

A monument to the "heroes of the battle of Grozny" has been erected in Maikop, but Igor's name is not on it. That means Lena cannot claim the 600,000 roubles ($120) of state compensation paid out to families of those killed in action. Worse, just as any Soviet soldier taken prisoner by the Wehrmacht in the second world war was regarded by Stalin as "a traitor to the fatherland", the "disappeared" are suspected of desertion by the defence ministry.

The "mothers" admit that 3,000-5,000 conscripts have deserted since the beginning of the conflict in Chechenia. The authorities have organised an increasing number of swoops in an attempt to catch deserters. Conscripts tend to desert, says one expert, more out of fear of *dyadovshchina* than of the actual fighting.

Salikhovskaya says: "This disgraceful war has highlighted what we've long known about living conditions in the army, both in Chechenia and in the average barracks."

An Izvestia reporter recently described how élite Russian troops who had surrounded the village of Pervomayskaya, in Dagestan, where a spectacular hostage-taking operation took place, ran completely out of rations and had to slaughter cattle stampeding out of the burning village.

According to an article published in February by the weekly Novaya Gazeta, cases of malnutrition are becoming common in the army. In places as close as 50km from the "rich capital", Moscow, starving conscripts often kill dogs as food, the paper claimed. This is confirmed by the mothers.

They say the army has just admitted that the death of 21-year-old Mikhail Kubarsky was "abnormal". He starved to death a few months after joining a regiment in the far eastern part of Russia. The 1.8m-tall conscript weighed just over 42kg when he died.

(May 2)

Pill and the pendulum

Pascale Krémer

REPEATED public awareness campaigns have resulted in the growing use of condoms by French teenagers. Research last year showed that 75 per cent of those in the 15-18 age bracket used a condom when they first had sex.

But this good news may be having an undesirable side effect. Teenage girls who anyway have to rely on condoms to protect themselves against Aids tend not to see any point in taking the pill as well. A new contraception campaign sponsored by the health ministry urges teenagers to use both the pill and the condom.

"Condoms aren't reliable enough as a contraceptive," says Dr David Serfaty, head of the birth-control department at the Hôpital St-Louis in Paris. "Early on in their sex lives teenagers often tear them or allow spillage. What's more, they don't use them regularly. That's why it's important to put across the idea of pill-plus-condom protection, which is very widespread in the Netherlands — the Dutch have the lowest rate of teenage pregnancies and abortions in the world."

Dr Sauveur Boukris, an expert on teenagers' problems, sees another danger: "Once a relationship of mutual trust has been set up, youngsters forget condoms. Once they're sure they've haven't got Aids they feel invulnerable. They no longer think of pregnancy as a possibility, because in recent years all the emphasis has been on Aids."

Another unfortunate side effect of condoms being used as the sole means of contraception is that teenage girls see gynaecologists less often. When they start being sexually active they no longer need to visit a gynaecologist to go on the pill — and thus fail to get screened for sexually transmitted diseases. Dr Serfaty says 31 per cent of the girls under 20 he sees suffer from chlamydia (a bacterium responsible for genito-urinary complaints).

Dr Boukris says: "Visiting a gynaecologist also means you have someone to talk to about sex — which is often difficult with family members — as well as about your health in general and possible psychological problems."

Marie-Belle Obadia, who works for a students' insurance company, points out that no nationwide campaign in favour of the pill has been organised since 1990. "Schools don't have the resources to keep teenage girls properly informed," she says. "Even girls whose mothers belong to the generation that fought for the pill are amazingly ignorant — their mothers assume they take the necessary precautions as a matter of course."

The new campaign to help teenage girls to control their fertility will be particularly welcome, because it will encourage them to look at their sexuality in terms of life rather than death — the latter is often the case whenever the risk of Aids is mentioned.

(May 28)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Lisa Buckingham and **Sarah Whitebloom** explore the truth behind headlines of boardroom excess

Top UK executives boost pay by 19pc

THE CAPACITY of Britain's boardrooms to cause untimely political upsets has been underlined with the disclosure in the Guardian Index of Top Executive Pay published last week, that top executives gave themselves pay rises last year of nearly 19 per cent — roughly five times both inflation and the average increase in earnings.

Such large pay rises at the top of industry are bound to embarrass the Prime Minister, who attempted to neuter the debate on executive remuneration by establishing the Greenbury Committee to investigate the entire issue.

That top-level inquiry team, headed by Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks & Spencer, published guidelines last year on the structure of boardroom salaries and perks.

But while the standard of disclosure in annual reports has improved, the new agenda has done little to dampen the pace of directors' pay rises.

The 10 most highly remunerated bosses all earned more than £1 million ($1.5 million), the equivalent of £19,230 every week — almost exactly what the average full-time male worker earns in a year.

Large salary rises — only nine FTSE-100 bosses took pay cuts last year — have, at least, been matched by company performance where earnings per share rose in the same period by an average of 24 per cent. But that increase in earnings was primed by the loss of 25,000 jobs from FTSE-100 companies.

The Guardian Index appears to show that the Greenbury Committee's advocacy of the idea that directors' earnings should be more closely linked to corporate performance is providing a short-term excuse for boardroom salaries to rise even more sharply.

And, although the committee's formation was prompted by public furor over the pay and perks at the top of newly privatised companies, Government attempts to keep the lid on the debate are this year being tested by traditional and longer-term members of FTSE-100 companies.

So far, very few of the privatised utilities and former government-owned corporations have published annual reports for 1995/96, so salary increases for their directors are not yet included.

In absolute terms, the 19 per cent average increase for the most highly-paid executives appears relatively modest. In only three of the eight years since the Guardian Index was launched in 1988 have average pay rises at the top of industry been lower.

The heady period of the late 1980s threw up average increases of 27 per cent and 33 per cent. Only with the sharp economic and profit downturn of the early 1990s did top pay begin to rein back, even dipping into single figures (9 per cent) for two of the survey years.

But the dislocation between the percentage increase in top executive pay and in average earnings has been wider only once in the past eight years when, in 1992, boardroom increases ran at 6.7 times the increase in earnings, compared with 5.3 times in the latest survey and a low of 1.2 times in 1991.

Only once since 1988 has the rate of executive pay rises run at such a large multiple of inflation. That was two years ago, when a profits rebound triggered bonus and incentive payments which ended by giving the most highly paid directors an average rise of around 25 per cent.

It is not only among the most highly paid directors that large increases have been seen. The enhanced role of non-executive directors following the Cadbury and Greenbury studies — which placed greater emphasis on independent directors — is also being reflected in pay scales.

A notable, if untypical, example is Dick Giordano, currently executive but formerly non-executive chairman of British Gas and the man responsible for fuelling the top pay debate by agreeing to a 75 per cent pay rise for his then chief executive, Cedric Brown. Mr Giordano earned nearly £840,000 last year from his FTSE roles which, in addition to his stewardship at British Gas, include BOC, mining group RTZ and drinks and foods giant Grand Metropolitan.

But industry chiefs argue that non-executive directors on remuneration committees are doing more to earn their money and are taking their duties more seriously.

Sir Michael Angus, non-executive chairman of Whitbread, chairman of Boots and deputy chairman of British Airways, said: "Remuneration committees are for the first time having to write a report themselves and, as a result, there is a greater feeling of accountability about."

He maintained that the emphasis was on ensuring a rigorous and proper process of setting remuneration rather than on restricting the rising level of directors' salaries.

Sir Michael said, however, that he had found that, in general, non-executives were "understanding their responsibilities" more clearly.

News that non-executives are taking their duties more seriously will be welcomed by shareholders. But critics are bound to ask why this step-change in non-executive scrutiny has been so long coming. It is now five years since the Cadbury report on boardroom ethics and there has been mounting public pressure for a tighter rein on boardroom salaries by independent directors for more than a decade.

Sir Richard Greenbury, whose last reported salary would have put him in the UK's 20 best remunerated executives, may not have achieved moderation in boardroom pay rises, but he has given impetus to the improved quality of disclosure which was enhanced in the wake of the Cadbury report.

It is now standard for companies to detail the pay packages of each named director rather than just the chairman and highest paid, as was the case a few years back.

The disclosure of share option values and windfalls is also improved, allowing shareholders to discover that on top of an apparently modest salary of £292,000, the Argos chief executive, Mike Smith, reaped profits of £614,900 on his options, while Richard Lapthorne, the finance director at British Aerospace, netted £1.1 million on the sale of part of his option holdings.

As yet, companies have been able to dodge disclosing the sometimes enormous costs that substantial pay rises for older executives can mean in terms of pension benefits. The Stock Exchange and Department of Trade and Industry are still deliberating which method should be used to calculate the cost of top executives' pension payments.

It is clear from this year's Guardian Index that almost all companies have decided to follow the Greenbury recommendation that long-term incentive plans (LTIPs) should be installed to link the rewards of directors more closely with the fortunes of their shareholders.

MOST new incentive plans are being put to annual meetings for shareholder approval, but it is clear that a number of companies have decided to brave the disapproval of investors by establishing LTIPs in addition to, rather than instead of, share option schemes.

Although a number of LTIPs appear flaccid in terms of the performance criteria needed to trigger executive benefits, there appears to have been some toughening in recent months. Nevertheless, the rewards many of these schemes will yield are phenomenal.

Supporters contend, however, that the LTIPs do at least introduce the notion of performance elements (share option plans were frequently not related to corporate improvement). Under the best of them, these criteria can be toughened. And, whatever the windfall gains in the boardroom, shareholders will turn a blind eye because their income will have been improved. But critics complain that improved disclosure simply allows companies to try to justify the unjustifiable. By producing lengthy and detailed reports from remuneration committee chairmen, a spurious credibility is given to the need for large or unusual payments.

It can certainly be argued that Greenbury's recommendation that a larger proportion of earnings be linked to corporate performance means Britain is heading into several years of substantial ratcheting up of boardroom pay.

The amount of remuneration linked to shareholder returns and company performance will increase and come closer to the US model where, typically, 50 to 75 per cent of executive remuneration is at risk if corporate performance falls short of target.

But UK executives have shown themselves remarkably resistant to the notion of cutting their basic pay. This means shareholders are likely to face the unpalatable spectacle that while basic pay will become a smaller proportion of overall earnings, that same basic pay will not be cut and indeed can be expected to increase by a factor of inflation. The risk element will simply begin to appear as the jam on the top. There will be riches aplenty for top-notch performance but nothing to be lost if performance goes backwards.

Remuneration consultant MM&K suggests that, in addition, "Greenbury could become directly responsible for increasing boardroom pay by alerting every director in the UK to the packages of his counterparts in competitor companies".

This adherence to safety first for members of the boardroom is also apparent in the refusal of all but a smattering of FTSE-100 companies, such as Hanson, to abide by the spirit of the Greenbury Committee recommendation that standard service contracts for senior executives should be for one year only.

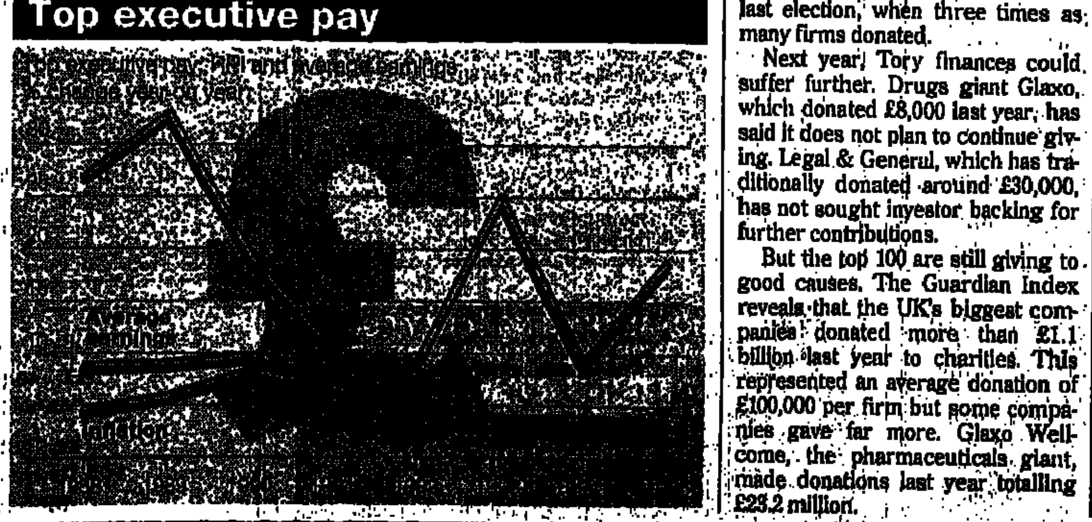
Most companies have concluded that their executives are far too special to risk pocketing only 12 months' salary if they are sacked for underperforming. Instead, the writers of annual reports are currently choosing to shield executives still enjoying two or three-year contracts behind Greenbury's list of potentially allowable exceptions.

Shareholders may not yet have come to grips with boardroom pay, but pressure from investors has had a substantial impact on companies' willingness to shell out for political purposes. Directors have been gradually cutting corporate contributions to the Conservative party. Research by the Guardian has revealed that only a few loyal top companies are now giving to Tory coffers, and contributions are a fraction of what they were before the last election.

It is estimated that the 12 remaining contributors from the FTSE-100 gave the Conservatives around £520,000 last year, less than half the amount given in the run-up to the last election, when three times as many firms donated.

Next year, Tory finances could suffer further. Drugs giant Glaxo, which donated £8,000 last year, has said it does not plan to continue giving. Legal & General, which has traditionally donated around £30,000, has not sought investor backing for further contributions.

But the top 100 are still giving to good causes. The Guardian Index reveals that the UK's biggest companies donated more than £1.1 billion last year to charities. This represented an average donation of £100,000 per firm but some companies gave far more. Glaxo Wellcome, the pharmaceuticals giant, made donations last year totalling £23.2 million.



In Brief

THE National Lottery operator Camelot made profits last year of $2.3 million a week. Pre-tax profits for 1995-96 came in at $120 million, which compares with $17 million in Camelot's first year of operation.

GEOFFREY BROADHURST, a former director of the Barings financial empire, has been expelled from the City for his role in the bank's near-$1.5 billion collapse last year.

FACIA, the stricken UK retail empire with debts of $47 million, has been dismembered, with three of its footwear businesses put into administration. The jobs of 8,500 staff at more than 1,000 high street shops remained under threat as receivers moved in to take over half of the collapsed group.

MOTOR components and aerospace group Lucas Industries has agreed terms for a $4.8 billion merger with the American company Varity, creating the eighth largest automotive supplier in the world.

THE PROSPECT of a summer of industrial unrest in Germany moved closer when it emerged that the finance ministers of the country's 16 federal states are planning large spending cuts to make up for reduced tax revenues.

INSIDER dealers in the UK will soon be under surveillance from a $9 million Big Brother-type computer system. The machine will use its own initiative to detect suspect trades.

EUROTUNNEL has launched its most ruthless campaign in the cross-Channel price war, slashing fares on Le Shuttle service by up to 60 per cent.

DALGETY, the food company with a large animal feedstuffs operation, warned that the scare over "mad cow" disease and an unrelated instance of contamination at a Dutch pet food factory will cut up to $39 million off profits this year.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates June 3	Sterling rates May 20
Australia	1.9321-1.9341	1.9024-1.9044
Austria	16.63-16.65	16.32-16.33
Belgium	48.60-48.63	47.66-47.73
Canada	2.1206-2.1212	2.0763-2.0780
Denmark	9.12-9.13	8.95-8.96
France	8.00-8.01	7.84-7.85
Germany	2.3641-2.3659	2.3197-2.3217
Hong Kong	11.96-11.98	11.69-11.70
Ireland	0.9757-0.9774	0.9662-0.9699
Italy	2,390-2,392	2,345-2,347
Japan	167.66-167.85	161.89-162.06
Netherlands	2.6476-2.6494	2.5918-2.5939
New Zealand	2.2739-2.2771	2.2138-2.2171
Norway	10.10-10.11	9.95-9.96
Portugal	243.66-244.06	238.29-238.55
Spain	198.92-199.08	193.33-193.49
Sweden	10.39-10.40	10.19-10.21
Switzerland	1.9346-1.9364	1.9083-1.9107
USA	1.5490-1.5496	1.5118-1.5125
ECU	1.2490-1.2496	1.2313-1.2329

FTSE100 Share Index down [illegible] at [illegible]. FTSE 250 Index down [illegible] at [illegible]. Gold down [illegible] at [illegible].

agricultural vacancies

Mozambique

World Vision UK is a Christian relief and development agency, operating as part of an international partnership in over 90 countries. We have a number of challenging Agricultural vacancies in Mozambique that require the ability to successfully implement performance based sustainable development programmes. Applicants must have a minimum of two years' experience in Sub-Saharan Africa, and agree with and support the Christian basis of faith.

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To co-ordinate all the development activities of the Agricultural Recovery Programme in the Zambezi Valley with particular emphasis on improving the nutritional status of the population through promotion of vegetables, fruit crops and high yielding farmer selected varieties. A MSc in Agricultural Sciences with an emphasis on farming systems and extension coupled with experience in either rural credit or livestock activities is required.

Zambezia Agricultural Development Project Manager
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Agricultural Recovery Programme Manager - *Tete Province*
To co-ordinate all aspects of the Agricultural Recovery Programme in Tete Province with emphasis on crop improvement, field trials investigation, extension and training, the promotion of crops and varieties with the potential to improve nutritional status, animal restocking and rural credit. Must have a minimum BSc in agricultural sciences and a higher qualification in agricultural development or research, together with a minimum of 10 years agricultural experience of which part should be in sub-Saharan Africa.

The location of these positions will be Mutarara, Tete Province, Quelimane, Zambezia Province and Tete City, Tete Province respectively. All positions require computer literacy and excellent oral and written communication skills in English. Portuguese would be a distinct advantage.



For an application pack contact Jonathan Clarke, **World Vision UK,** 599 Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK9 3PG.
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The closing date for applications is 5 July 1996. Interviews in Hong Kong will take place in the week of 22-26 July 1996. Starting date of employment will be in September 1996. The initial contract period is 24 months. Please send a letter of application with your CV (including references) to Tricia Parker, Programme Director, Oxfam Hong Kong, 7/F1, 191 Woosung Street, Jordan, Kowloon, Hong Kong or by fax to 852-2789 9545.

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Further particulars (including details of the duties, salaries and allowances attached to both the university and the college posts) which all applicants are asked to consult, may be obtained by contacting Miss E.L.Wilson, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD (telephone (01865) 270561; fax (01865) 270708; email: Emma.Wilson@admin.ox.ac.uk). Further particulars will also be available at the University of Oxford's WWW site, in the University Job Vacancies section of the Central Administration page at http://info.ox.ac.uk/oxford.

Completed applications (10 typed copies, or one from candidates overseas), containing a curriculum vitae, a list of publications and statement of research should be submitted to Miss E.L.Wilson by 21 June 1996. Applicants are asked to arrange for three references to be sent to the above address by the closing date. Applicants will be notified if they are required for interview. It is expected that these will be held in early July.

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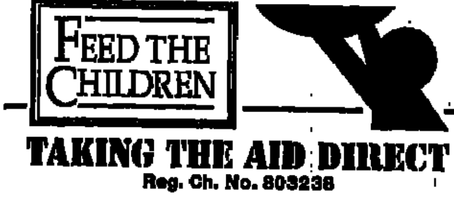
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To apply (only shortlisted candidates will be contacted) please send your CV with covering letter, by June 28th 1996 to James Davidson, at:

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Informal enquiries may be made to Professor Brendan Evans, Dean of the School of Music and Humanities, on 01484 422288 ext. 2242 or to Mr Glyn Williams, Head of the Division of Languages, on ext. 2367,

Closing date: 21 June 1996.

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Personnel Office, The University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH. Tel: (01484) 472845.



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Israelis respond to Bibi's siren call

Derek Brown profiles Israel's enigmatic new prime minister

THE NEXT prime minister of Israel, as a profound admirer of Winston Churchill, is doubtless familiar with the great man's celebrated description of Soviet policy in 1939: "It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

There could be no fitter description of Binyamin "Bibi" Netanyahu, both the best-known and least-known political leader in Israel. Everyone knows Bibi: he's the one with the face that launched a thousand quips. The soundbite king; the great performer; the man who illustrated his country's peril during Desert Storm by wearing a gas mask on CNN, and who shocked Israel into fits of giggles by confessing, live on primetime TV, that he had had an extramarital affair.

When Israelis talk about Bibi, two words invariably pop up: "shallow" and "superficial". Such is the flattening effect of television on image. In reality, he is a much more complex than the usual Israeli leaders: the grizzled veterans, marinated for generations in their own clichéd slogans.

Bibi is a closed book, which just happens to have a shiny bonkbuster cover hinting at the story within — enshrined as Bibigate, featuring sex, lies, and maybe a raunchy videotape. Of which more later.

The dizzying rise of Netanyahu is not so much mysterious as chilling. Astute, articulate, and, when need be, utterly ruthless, he carved his way past the sagging old guard of the Likud movement, and the "party princes" — the rising generations with more experience. Bibi is, by common consent, a driven man. He is consumed by personal ambition, but he has other, higher goals: one is the survival of the Zionist state; another is the elimination of "terrorism".

Obsessiveness is part of his inheritance. Born in Tel Aviv in 1949, he is the son of Benzion Netanyahu, renowned scholar and arch-nationalist. Part of Netanyahu senior's life's work, The Origins Of The Inquisition In Fifteenth Century Spain, was published last year. The other part is his austere dedication to revisionist Zionism, the cause of his idol and mentor, Ze'ev Jabotinsky. This is a hard, uncompromising view of Zionism; that the Arabs were the implacable foes of the Jews, and that Israel should be established on both sides of the Jordan, whatever the cost.

The other great formative influence in Bibi's life is the United States. He went to live there aged 14, when his father, embittered by modern Israel, took up an academic job in Philadelphia. Bibi was apparently devastated by the move, but adapted so readily that when he returned to Israel for army service, he had difficulty fitting in with the egalitarian informality of his native land.

He had a distinguished military career, rising to captain and serving in the dangerous, daredevil border reconnaissance unit. He was wounded in the face while helping to rescue hijacked passengers from a Sabena aircraft in 1972.

Later that year, he returned to the US to study at the Massachussets Institute of Technology. He graduated in architecture, took a master's degree in business administration, and honed his political skills by defending Israel in public meetings. Whatever doubts he may have had — he simplified his name by deed poll to Benjamin Nitay — were swept aside by possibly the defining event in his life: the death of his brother, Yonatan.

Yoni Netanyahu was the only Israeli soldier killed in the sensational commando raid on Entebbe, which rescued 106 hijacked hostages from under Idi Amin's nose. Bibi was devastated, and hurled himself into the national movement which elevated Yoni to icon status. In 1980 Bibi set up and directed the Yonatan Institute, dedicated to the study of terrorism and how to combat it. The work crystallised his passionate conviction that terror is ultimately a weapon of states and can be successfully countered.

By this time, the singular pattern of Bibi's personal life had been set. In 1978, while working in a business consultancy in Boston, he married Micky, a postgraduate student. They had a daughter, Noa, but the marriage foundered when Micky learned of Bibi's affair with Fleur Cates, an English graduate of the Harvard Business School. The soap opera switched to Israel, where Bibi was briefly employed as a furniture company manager. He married Fleur in 1981 but Bibi's political career started to soar, and again the marriage imploded. They divorced in 1988.

Netanyahu: an astute, articulate, and utterly ruthless politician

Bibi's first public job came at the request of Moshe Arens, a leading Likudnik and newly-appointed ambassador to the US, to join him in Washington as number two — dream job for the young, articulate, American-accented Netanyahu. He dazzled diplomatic correspondents with his silky smooth, deeply sincere advocacy of his country. Soon he found himself in the high-profile role of Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. Lionised by New York society, he honed and buffed his US-Israeli composite image. It did him no harm in his first, successful tilt at the Knesset (parliament) in 1988, and a great deal of good when he became deputy foreign minister — to Arens again.

The Gulf war brought truly international fame. Bibi's mastery of the soundbite may have cemented his two-dimensional image, but it gave him a persona and a priceless weapon in the campaign for the next target: leadership of the Likud.

In 1991, Bibi was married for the third time, to Sara, an El Al stewardess. He also found time to embark on an affair with a PR consultant; the affair that led to Bibigate. Sara was tipped off in an anonymous phone call in January 1993, two months before the crucial leadership election. What occurred between the Netanyahus may never be known. What is known is that Bibi headed immediately for the place he knows best: the television studio. He confessed, almost tearfully, that he had been unfaithful.

The nation was convulsed — by laughter. Marital infidelity is just as hurtful, just as seamy, in Israel as anywhere else. But it is also a good deal more common. That a politician should think it worthy of primetime was bizarre to most Israelis.

But Bibi had more spice to offer. A political rival, he claimed, was threatening to release a videotape showing him "in compromising romantic situations" unless he dropped out of the leadership race.

The target of this remarkable charge, though unnamed, was the man who loathes Netanyahu more than any other: former foreign minister and thwarted would-be Likud leader David Levy.

Levy threw a fit and extracted an apology from Bibi. The police were called in and found no evidence of a video or a plot. But the damage was done: in March 1993, Netanyahu swept to victory in the party convention.

As opposition leader, Bibi has had to endure a government which was seemingly unstoppable; a government which made all the running. Last year, opposition to the Oslo accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation became more ugly. Posters appeared of prime minister Rabin in SS uniform. Slogans against "traitors" were shouted at Likud and other rightwing rallies. On November 4, Bibi's worst nightmare was acted out in a Tel Aviv square. Yitzhak Rabin was gunned down by a young Jewish zealot, an ardent opponent of the peace accords, Yigal Amir.

In an instant the nation was plunged into cathartic grief and an orgy of remorse. Young people poured on to the streets to light candles for the man whom Bibi had reviled. Endless queues wound past Rabin's grave. The politics of hatred was excoriated. Leah, the widow of the murdered leader, accused Bibi of incitement.

IN VAIN he blustered and indignantly denied the charge. The opinion polls slipped from crisis to calamity. The new prime minister, Shimon Peres, had a 20-point lead. The story of how that unprecedented advantage was squandered is not Bibi's story. He was not consulted when Peres ordered the assassination of Hamas master bombmaker Yahya Ayyash, sparking the inevitable vengeance. Nor could Bibi do more than look on when the bombers struck back, taking 63 lives in less than two weeks.

Even when the election was called, the Likud leader's hands were, to an extent, tied. He did not dare unleash the fire and brimstone fervour of the old campaign against Rabin. He could not criticise too loudly the government's disastrous adventure in attacking Lebanon.

What he could do, and nobody could have done it better, was to drive home, with deadly drumming persistence, the single point that the peace has not brought security. At the climax of the election campaign, last week's television debate, he did not have to be glib or clever or inventive. He just had to say the word "fear". He said it 14 times, because that's the way the message gets over. And it did.

Cristina Sánchez, Europe's first female matador PHOTO: PATRICK GARDIN

Taking the bull by the horns

"*WOMEN CARESS* better and as you know, bullfighting is all about caresses." With these words of encouragement from her *padrino* or veteran sponsor bullfighter, Cristina Sánchez took to the ring in Nimes, southern France, last month to kill a mature bull for the first time and thus become the latest in a tiny line of female bullfighters which dates back to the 18th century, *writes Adela Gooch in Madrid.*

For the 25-year-old bullfighter from Parla, a small town 40km south of Madrid, the traditional *alternativa* ceremony was the culmination of a decade-long struggle to carve a niche in the most emblematic of male-dominated worlds.

Sánchez confirms Spanish lore that only abject poverty or family example can drive a person to take up bullfighting. Her father, Antonio, is a fireman and matador manqué who now acts as one of her *cuadrilla* of assistant bullfighters. Yet even he tried to dissuade her when, at the age of 16, after fighting a small cow in a field and feeling "something strange take hold of me, something I liked", she announced her intention to stop training as a hairdresser and take to the rings.

"He said if it was hard for a man, it was even harder for a woman. My mother was adamantly against it. But when I decided I would do it with or without their backing, my father took my side and persuaded her. Now she even comes to see me fight, which takes enormous courage." It would have been easy for Sánchez, the second of four sisters, to trade on her femininity and become a gimmicky *torero*. Instead, she chose to do it the hard way, training in the professional bullfighters' academy in Madrid: the only female among more than 100 men, she graduated third. She has been badly gored three times and injured on numerous occasions.

Sánchez herself acknowledges that the female frame makes it harder to lean between the bull's horns and plunge in a sword. "I simply have to train more," she counters. "Men are stronger and I have to redress that balance."

The combination of elements needed is complex, but rests above all in achieving symbiosis between fighter and bull. While male matadors often see the process in erotic terms, Sánchez prefers to use different imagery: "It is a dance. You have to be very light on your feet, very fast-moving to transmit a sense of the aesthetic. You have to be in harmony with the bull."

Sánchez has been subject to frequent verbal abuse from aficionados and open hostility from colleagues. "Bulls are associated with courage, with virility, and some men cannot forgive a woman for holding her own in that environment. I sometimes feel very lonely but I belong in this world," Sánchez insists.

To date, no woman has formally become a matador on Spanish soil. Sánchez's "alternativa" ceremony in Nimes was the first held in Europe. Sánchez admits to making many sacrifices but she does not accept that being taken seriously in the ring means renouncing femininity.

"And anyway bullfighter's life is short. There can be time for children afterwards."

The Northern Territory is set to make history as the first jurisdiction to allow doctors to help terminally ill people to die. **Margaret Simons** reports from Darwin

Australia's deliverance day

AUSTRALIANS are unlikely to forget the date July 1, 1996. From that day, a doctor called Philip Nitschke will have the power to put into use a unique application of computer technology — his death machine.

Nitschke has linked a computer to a syringe that will be filled with deadly drugs. His patients will work their way through a series of screens before they push a key that will end it all.

On the second screen is the blunt warning: "This device has been set to deliver a lethal injection. To proceed to the next step you must press YES." The last screen reads: "If you press YES, you will cause a lethal injection to be given in 30 seconds, and will die. YES or NO."

In an earlier prototype of the Deliverance program, the patient could choose from a range of CD music options, and the final message on the screen was "Goodbye and Good Luck". Now the final exit will be silent. When the machine becomes available for use in July, the Northern Territory of Australia, where Nitschke practises, will become the first jurisdiction in the world where a doctor can legally assist the terminally ill to commit suicide.

People can be very determined to die — or at least to choose the manner of their departure. It is a determination we normally associate with the will to live. But in Darwin, the remote capital of the Northern Territory, it is the will to end life that is dividing the community.

A year ago, the state's parliament passed the first legislation in the world making euthanasia legal. Almost immediately, tragic journeys began. At least half a dozen people from across Australia sold property, said farewell to relatives, and travelled to Darwin, only to end up in a motel room, unable to die.

The law demanded that palliative care be upgraded, a hospice established and an education programme conducted before the law came into effect. Nobody was prepared to say how long all this would take.

One wife smuggled her 85-year-old husband out of hospital and on to a plane, terrified the airline would realise he was not fit to fly. They booked into a Darwin motel and contacted a doctor, but were told they couldn't yet be helped. The man died, weeks later. By his own hand? "Who knows," says Nitschke. "This is a small community. It's like a goldfish bowl up here at the moment. We are watched."

After July 1, patients who satisfy the rigorous requirements of the law will be able to receive the medical help they crave. Meanwhile, there is raw emotion in Darwin, which opponents of the law say will become the world's Death City, the destination for one-way tourism.

The arguments from doctors, right-to-lifers and the churches vary from respect for the sanctity of human life to fears that this will be the thin end of the wedge — that voluntary euthanasia will open the door for the venal to have their relatives put down.

"The scaremongering suggests you are a murderer, that you want to bump off people who are in the way, that you are harking back to Hitler's Germany," says Lynda Cracknell, president of the Darwin Pro-euthanasia Society.

Why is this happening here, of all the places in the world? Why has this tiny parliament of 25 members and no upper house, covering a jurisdiction of just 173,000 people spread over an area nearly six times the size of Britain, done what no other parliament in the world would dare to do?

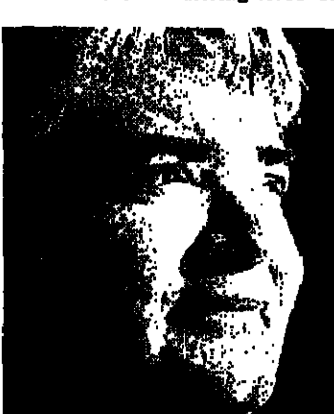
To many Australians, the "Top End", as the Northern Territory is known, is seen as frontier country — hard-drinking, maverick, macho.

It is the last place in Australia where such radical reform would have been expected. Since self-government in 1978, every election has been won by the conservative Country-Liberal Party, dominated for the past decade by the charismatic and enigmatic chief minister, Marshall Perron.

Elections have been presidential affairs: Perron versus Labor. Suddenly and quite deliberately, after 21 years during which he never voiced any concern for the rights of the terminally ill, Perron made legalised suicide his political swan song and memorial. He drafted The Rights of the Terminally Ill Act and introduced it as a private member's bill. Then, on the eve of the crucial conscience vote, he announced his intention to retire.

"He basically asked us to give it to him as a parting gift," remarked one MP. "Well, there aren't too many ways for a Territory politician to write himself into the international history books."

Now officially retired and tinkering with his beloved hot-rod cars, Perron is still the driving force behind the scenes. But why did he do it? "That is the question I am always asked, and the answer is a bland one which doesn't satisfy people," he says. "The truth is I have always felt that a person who is suffering and near death ought to have the right and ability to end their lives if they choose."


Jan Culhane: desperately hopes to be the first to test the new law

He also believes in the power of small jurisdictions to do radical things. He points to the example of South Australia, which in the 1890s, when it was still a tiny colony, became the first place in the world to give women the vote and the right to run for parliament.

He believes that in 100 years euthanasia will be seen as logical and necessary, just like women's suffrage. And the Northern Territory will have been in the vanguard.

Before Perron introduced his bill, Philip Nitschke was pricked into action on euthanasia when the Australian Medical Association claimed there wasn't a single doctor in the Territory who would co-operate with its implementation. He persuaded a group of doctors to sign an advertisement contradicting the association's line. Then, suddenly, "I was drowning in it".

Jan Culhane, a nurse, aged 51, is likely to be the first person to begin the process towards legal euthanasia. She is already living in Darwin, having moved from New South Wales shortly after the legislation was passed. In the only interview she has given, she expressed a fervent desire not to live to her 52nd birthday next August.

Hers has been a sad and difficult life, lived with fierce independence and determination. Her fear of losing that independence is what is driving her to seek early death.

She divorced an alcoholic husband and raised three children by herself, including one with Downs syndrome. A fourth child drowned at the age of six.

For the past five years, she has suffered from breast cancer and had both breasts removed. Now the disease has spread to her lymph nodes. Chemotherapy left her vomiting and unable to live independently, so she stopped taking the treatment, and keeps her pain killers to a minimum so she doesn't have to rely too much on others for help.

Her reason for wishing to die, she said, was "that I will not live in fear . . . I think the fear that I suffer is just as severe as the physical pain. I'm by no means in more pain than I've ever seen people survive under, but it's pain that I'm not willing to accept.

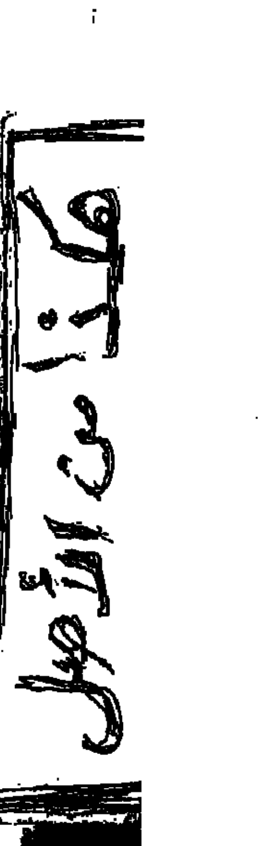
"I raised my three children to be as independent as possible. That was my aim as a mother . . . I felt that I had got to the stage where I had instigated all the help that my Downs syndrome son needed to survive in the world. It was my time. When I came to Darwin it was a relief. I didn't continually have to be on the ball, and worry about them, and I know that's selfish . . ." Then she broke down.

Nitschke says he fears for Culhane. Despite everything, her journey to Darwin may still end in disappointment. The requirements of the legislation are strict. She will first have to request help to commit suicide from a Northern Territory doctor, who must be satisfied she is suffering from a terminal illness involving unacceptable suffering. The diagnosis must be confirmed by a second doctor, and a psychiatrist must find that she is not suffering from a treatable depression.

After waiting at least seven days from the initial request, Culhane will have to sign a form titled "Request for Assistance to end my life in a Humane and Dignified Manner". She will then have to wait at least another 48 hours before her life can end in the presence of the initial doctor.

As the day of reckoning approaches, Darwin grows daily more divided between those who are proud to grant what they see as a basic human right and those who shudder at the implications. Human suffering has no calculus. Pain cannot be measured. All that can be safely said is that some people are determined to put an end to it. For them, Darwin has become the focus of their dreams.

Margaret Simons is a novelist living near Sydney



Battle of the bottle breaks out

US health crusaders have turned to temperance. **Jonathan Freedland** on the new booze-busters

THE MEN are chewing thick stogies, the women are in chiffon and the band is playing swing. It's a retro scene. The orchestra leader, his hair brilliantined like the crooners of old, is tromboning The Man That Got Away for an audience too young to remember Liza Minnelli, let alone her mother Judy Garland who made it a hit.

The party's been thrown by the No Left Turn group of young Republican women who have hired a Washington club for a fund-raiser. They look like their politics: defiantly old-fashioned. The men wear sober suits, the women have high-pitched voices and the former ask the latter to dance. And they are drinking. April has a martini, Kent a scotch. "We smoke, we drink, we do everything bad!" burbles Kimberly, a Capitol Hill staffer.

The ladies of No Left Turn have realised something the rest of America is just beginning to understand: alcohol is joining tobacco as a scorned, passé commodity — a habit the nation is increasingly giving up. Consumption of alcohol in the United States is the lowest it has been since 1964; spirit sales are at a 50-year low and experts predict the decline will get steeper. A campaign is gathering pace, targeting the brewers and distillers with the same ammunition once aimed solely at cigarette makers. New anti-drink laws are debated in Congress and tighter ones have already become law in the 50 states.

Popular culture has joined the assault, with Hollywood ditching old images of the lovable drunk and replacing them with harrowing portrayals of alcohol abuse. The respected Scientific American journal has declared that "a third era of temperance" is now under way in the US, on a par with the religiously inspired crackdown of the 1850s and the greatest anti-alcohol backlash of all — the Prohibition of the 1920s.

Spirits have been hit worst, with a 34.9 per cent slump in consumption since 1977. Beer is still the US's fourth favourite beverage (after soft drinks, coffee and milk) but less is sold now than 20 years ago — despite billions of dollars spent on advertising and a proliferation of new products, from "ice" beers to the niche, microbrewed, brands. Tellingly, "Lite" beers outsell the real thing. Wine has held on — just. It's ninth in the US beverage charts — outsold by bottled water, tea, fruit juice and powdered squashes. Think about it: Americans don't even know how to make a cup of tea but they drink more of it than wine.

"America is a very dry country," beams George Hacker, the chief anti-alcohol campaigner at the Centre for Science in the Public Interest. Hacker notes with satisfaction that 40 per cent of Americans now abstain from alcohol completely and even among those who drink, 90 per cent do so at or below the federally recommended level: two units a day for a man, a unit for a woman (a glass of wine counts as a unit).

With little fanfare, America has developed a strikingly low tolerance for alcohol. Consider the case of the Seattle woman who, 9½ months pregnant, ordered a drink back in 1991. She had resisted alcohol throughout her pregnancy but she'd also read the experts who said that one drink so late in term carried almost no risk. At a leading Seattle restaurant she asked for a glass of wine with her meal. The waiters refused, citing the health of her foetus. There was a row and the waiters lost their jobs. But public opinion sided with the men: one embryologist even proposed a ban on serving alcohol to pregnant women in public.



Smashed . . . The new Hollywood takes on drink, with Nicolas Cage knocking it back in Leaving Las Vegas. Right, Prohibition men at work in 1924

The episode was utterly in step with US culture's growing distaste for booze. Hollywood once enjoyed watching Dean Martin revel in drunkenness: the wobbly walk and slurred speech served him so well he launched his own liquor label — Dino's. Now film drunks are objects of pity, bent on self-destruction. Nicolas Cage bagged an Oscar for his performance in Leaving Las Vegas, a virtual public information film about alcohol abuse; Meg Ryan got there a year earlier, victim of the hard stuff in When A Man Loves A Woman.

The already tight US rules on drink are getting tighter. At bars and clubs you have to have ID — driving licences, birth certificates — to prove your age. The legal drinking age of 21 is strictly enforced. Never mind that it's legal to serve alcohol at 18, you have to wait three more years for a drink. It's been that way since the mid-eighties, when the federal government threatened to withhold roadbuilding funds from any state that did not raise its minimum drinking age. Reinforcing the "sobriety checkpoints" on the roads, where police can conduct random breath-tests, are the so-called Dramshop laws, now in force in 30 of the 50 states. These are aimed not only at drinkers but the people who get them drunk. If a sozzled American crashes his car, whoever poured that last "one for the road" could end up in the dock with him. In some states that includes not just bartenders but even hosts throwing a private party.

A new breed of anti-booze lawyer has evolved to take advantage of the crackdown. "I sue bars," says Alfred Sennedella III. "If you serve someone to the point of intoxication and beyond, if you put someone on the road that does injury, I will take your insurance protection, your liquor licence, your establishment, your savings, your home. I will take you to the cleaners." Nice guy, Mr Sennedella — and doing very well.

US brewers could find their trade further restricted if a new bill becomes law. Tabled by Congressman Joe Kennedy — whose uncle Ted is winning plaudits for his effort to haul his considerable bulk on the wagon — the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse Prevention Bill would impose a battery of new curbs on liquor marketing. Since 1989 all US beer bottles have included a health warning targeted at pregnant women; the aim now is to have similar notices attached to ads in print, on radio and on TV.

Companies would find their advertising budgets no longer tax-deductible; Congress would demand an annual report on the promotion of booze, compiled by the health secretary; new rules would restrict even the mildest marketing drive aimed at young people.

Campaigners portray consumers as being victims of a vicious corporate plan to hook them on a toxic drug

Anti-drink activists are no longer pursuing easy targets such as drink-driving but the very business of booze. When they started in the late 1970s, groups such as Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID) and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) defined their enemy narrowly. The strategy worked, with rapid successes in changing the law on drink-driving — lowering the legal limit, making jail more likely and allowing courts to remove motorists' licences without a hearing if their blood alcohol level exceeds 0.1 per cent. Now Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) proposes a contract between teenagers and parents, whereby kids call for a lift if they've been drinking and their parents promise to pick them up. But MADD and RID have condemned the scheme for condoning youthful drinking and not seeking to eliminate it.

Leading the charge are the latter-day booze-busters, heirs to the bygone Anti-Saloon League and Women's Christian Temperance Union. These lawyers, preachers, scientists and politicians have taken the message of the 1850s and 1920s and updated it for the 1990s. They attack drink not as a moral scourge but a health hazard.

Former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern has become a spiritual leader to the movement, following the death of his daughter, Terry. Aged 45, she dropped down drunk in a snowstorm and froze to death in 1994. McGovern, demanding "an all-out war against alcoholism", notes that, with 100,000 alcohol-related deaths in the US annually, liquor is claiming double the number of American lives lost in the entire Vietnam war — every year.

George Hacker describes alcohol as the US's third biggest killer and leading slayer of 15- to 24-year-olds. What's more (always an effective argument in the US) alcohol consumption costs, draining the US economy of $100 billion a year in lost working days and hospital bills.

The anti-drinkers are deploying the same tactics against brewers and distillers that the anti-smoking campaigners heap on tobacco. Shrewdly, they don't blame the drinker or smoker for pursuing an unpleasant habit but portray consumers as victims of a vicious corporate plan to hook them on a toxic drug.

Activists estimate the industry spends more than $2 billion a year in "propaganda" for alcohol, targeting those most vulnerable, starting with the young.

Tobacco has Joe Camel, alcohol has the Budweiser frogs: three, computer-enhanced toads who croak a syllable each — Bud, Weis, Er. Hacker says that just as Joe Camel is designed to lure kids on to fags, so the frogs represent "a campaign that unscrupulously appeals to children".

Earlier this year shareholders of Budweiser's parent company, Anheuser-Busch, expressed anxiety over a survey that showed more nine- to 11-year-old kids were more familiar with the frogs' slogan than with Tony the Tiger's pitch for Frosties ("They're Gr-r-r-eat!").

"It doesn't mean we're going after young people, it just means they know who the frogs are," says Jeff Eller, spokesman for the Beer Institute trade association. "What advertising doesn't do is encourage more kids to drink or encourage kids who do drink to drink more."

"Baloney," says Hacker. "It's like any other product; they target the heavy users." This is the most sensitive charge of all, for it touches on the explosive matter of race. Activists lament the black neighbourhoods that have no cinemas or decent shops but always seem to have a neon-lit liquor store. They note the "good life" billboards showing beautiful, young African-Americans chugging on ice-cold beer. "You look at who's being incarcerated, who's dropping out of school, and you look at all the social and health problems associated with alcohol — it's in the black community," says Rev Alfa Estes Brown, a temperance campaigner in Washington, DC, leading attempts at direct action by whitewashing over the booze billboards in black neighbourhoods.

The industry is fighting back, proposing a new notice on bottles of red wine which would promote its health benefits as a safeguard against heart disease and funding self-regulation courses which train bartenders not to push customers over the limit.

But the US is on a different course. There is not yet a 1996 version of Carry Nation, the turn-of-the-century temperance heroine who — Bible in one hand, axe in the other — vandalised saloons. The new activists publicly disdain prohibition (although they remind you that it did wonders for public health and led to an all-time low in cirrhosis of the liver) but a clear appetite for abstinence has returned.



Painful process . . . The rack was last used in the Tower of London in 1640 ILLUSTRATION: BRITISH LIBRARY

The torturer's century

The infliction of pain on humans has reached new depths of cruelty — and become big business, writes **Leonard Doyle**

THROUGHOUT recorded history, and no doubt before, torturers have been tearing at the flesh and battering men, women and children not intending to kill, but to extract confessions and intimidate.

Amnesty International's new report on torture, A Glimpse Of Hell, is a horror story from beginning to end. The forms of torture in use today are cruel beyond belief, but there is also the frisson which people experience when contemplating human cruelty, degradation and suffering and the frequently tacit acceptance that torture is a necessary evil.

Also dismaying is the extent to which torture practised by governments around the world increased dramatically this century, especially in Europe. After tapering off with the Enlightenment in Europe in the 17th century to the extent that it had almost disappeared, it returned with a vengeance with the rise of the Nazis and Russian communism. This may become known as the torturer's century.

Despite earnest attempts to ban torture by the United Nations, there are always loopholes allowing "lawful sanctions" and it stills shows up with niggling frequency in Europe. Last month General Enrique Rodriguez Galindo, a senior officer in Spain's paramilitary civil guard, was jailed, accused of being involved in the torture and murder of two suspected members of the ETA Basque terror organisation.

Ill-treatment of terrorist suspects in Northern Ireland has been well documented. And even in Denmark the use of the "leg-lock", in which handcuffs are applied behind the back, then one foot wedged behind the other knee and the second foot under the handcuff, was only banned in 1994 after it was exposed by Amnesty.

But it is in Asia and the Islamic world that the torturers really come into their own. The technology is both modern and medieval, from leg shackles to trauma-inducing drugs, but the effect is the same.

And some of the methods devised in Europe in the Middle Ages to make punishment or execution as painful and prolonged as possible are still in widespread use around the world today. The English technique of *peigne forte et dure*, in which the suspect was forced to lie on the floor and increasingly heavy weights were put on the chest, often to the point of death, was finally abolished in 1772. This form of torture is common across the Middle East, Amnesty says.

The rack — last used in the Tower of London in 1640 — is a tourist attraction, but Western exports of prison, restraining and torture equipment is a highly profitable business. The biggest markets are in the Far and Middle East, but buyers are to be found in liberal free-market democracies and despotic dictatorships alike.

The trade is even codified and the United States has special customs categories for torture equipment, including such items as thumbcuffs, thumbscrews, stun guns and electric shock batons.

Electro-shock weapons are among the most sought after items of modern torture technology. Amnesty says that use of this method is so endemic it has become impossible to document the number of victims.

A Glimpse of Hell, Amnesty International UK, £12.95

Letter from Senegal Mike Noyes

Under examination

"YOU CAN start now," said the invigilator. I turned over the exam paper and started to read through the questions. From the wall, a picture of the president looked down on me, just to make sure I wouldn't think of cheating. Looking up from my paper, I avoided his stern gaze and glanced around me. The room was empty. Distance learning can be a rewarding experience, but sitting in an unfamiliar classroom for three hours with only a bored invigilator and 29 empty desks for company reminds you that it can also be a very lonely one.

I am studying environmental management by distance learning through Wye College. I am here for the annual ritual of frenzied scribbling in the end-of-year exams. Nine months of persistently trying to keep to the timetable suggested, and never quite managing to do so, reached their climax in this hot, unventilated classroom in the ministry of education in Dakar.

Things got off to a bad start on the morning of my first exam. I live about 1,000 miles from the exam centre. Not wanting to lose precious cramming time to the distractions of the big city, I'd arrived in Dakar the evening before the exams were due to start. Experience of previous exams had persuaded me to confirm everything by telephone with the registrar the week before. I even got to the centre an hour early to deal with any formalities. The registrar was not at his desk. "He was here first thing this morning, but only to report sick. He said you'd be coming and would need a room and an invigilator today," said the clerk.

At first this seemed to be only a minor hiccup. A room was waiting, and I was introduced to my personal invigilator. Then it became clear that things weren't going to run smoothly after all. The registrar had not given the director the envelope containing the exam papers and documentation. "Can you come back again another time?" suggested the director. "It is only a minor ailment he has, and he said he'll probably be back the day after tomorrow." After spending nine months studying hard, filling a thousand pages of revision notes, and then travelling so far just to get to the exam centre, this proposition was not welcome. I explained that these are university exams with set times and conditions, that shouldn't be altered at a moment's notice. The truth was that I was as ready as I possibly could be for this exam.

After I succeeded in persuading the director to go through his colleague's filing cabinet, the envelope from London emerged. I was then asked to explain what I needed from it. We found the sealed question papers and the answer books, but not my entry slip with my candidate number. It was agreed that I could do the exam without this: as I was the only candidate in the country there would be no chance of a mix-up of answer papers, and when the registrar recovered, the number could be entered on the scripts. Thus, just five minutes after the paper should have started, and almost an hour after I arrived, I finally knew I was going to be able to sit the exam.

I sat down with my set of pens and pencils, and my bottle of mineral water. Dakar at exam time is very warm and humid. The English class in the opposite room were listening to a taped lesson about nationalities: "China, Chinese; Japan, Japanese". The invigilator wished me good luck, told me I could start, and settled down to his detective novel.

THE questions were fair, and I was happy enough, but by the third hour the humidity became as challenging as the questions, and my water bottle was empty. My forearm was so damp it stuck to the paper underneath, making writing a problem. The invigilator, having reminded me that only five minutes remained, returned to his book and almost forgot to stop me.

I'll be back next year for the last lot of exams. In the meantime I await the results and next year's course material. The problem now is what on earth to do with my spare time. Feeling guilty about not studying is a hard habit to break, much harder than not studying. But the man from the video store greeted me like a long lost friend. I'll soon be quite settled into a routine of friends and family again. Just in time for the arrival of the big parcel of books that announces the new academic year.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

IS THERE any reason why so many African leaders (Mobutu, Mandela, Museveni, Moi, Mugabe, Meles, Muluzi, Mswati) have names beginning with M?

ALL BUT one belong to the Bantu family of languages, which is spoken in most of Africa south of the Equator. The prefix mu-, mo-, ma-, or m', indicates a person, and so is common in African surnames. The English equivalent is to be found in suffix form, as in Bowman, Brightman, Freeman. — *Kevin Shillington, London*

IT IS not only African leaders whose names begin with M. Many African countries (Mali, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique), cities (Maputo, Marrakesh, Mombasa, Monrovia) and tribes (Masai, Matabele) also begin with M. This is not purely an African phenomenon, however. The Fowlers in EastEnders named their three children Mark, Michelle and Martin, Magnus Magnusson hosts Mastermind, and Manchester, Madrid and Milan have all won their countries' respective football championships this year. Major took over from Maggie, his deputy is Michael, his home secretary is Michael, his foreign secretary is Malcolm, his lord chancellor is Mackay and the chairman of his party is Mawhinney. And he has mislaid his marbles. — *William Barrett, London*

WHAT do we call the channel running vertically from the base of the nose to the edge of the centre of the upper lip?

THE philtrum. — *John Roddenbeck, Cairo, Egypt; Andrew Morton, Taipei, Taiwan et al*

HOW has the word "loo" become a British euphemism for water closet?

THOMAS CRAPPER, 17th century engineer and plumber, called his invaluable contraption the "water-closet". The respectable Victorian middle classes, swaddling their pianos lest they show too much leg and coining "light" and "dark" meat to avoid saying breast or thigh, shortened it to WC.

Clever punsters that they thought they were, they then coined "Waterloo", which gave the double satisfaction of not saying the vulgar thing and keeping alive the memory of a famous victory over the French. Since then, "water" has disappeared altogether, and we are left with "loo". — *Michael Woosnam-Mills, La Dinanderie, France*

THE WORD loo originally came from the French *l'eau*, or water. The general population in the middle centuries in France used to throw the chamber pot out into the street while saying *"Regardez l'eau!"* to warn any poor fool below. — *James Polson, Canberra, Australia*

THIS is the shortened version of "Le oo", as used in France in the days when two holes were cut in the door of the WC so that you could see if it was occupied. — *Joan Ireson, Harold Wood, Essex*

HOW DO the French decide the gender of English words adopted into their language?

THERE are at least two exceptions to the rule that French borrowings of English words are masculine except when they apply only to a woman. The French say *une interview*, possibly because of the grammatical attraction of *une entrevue*, itself the origin of the English word "interview". And even the most feminine *top model* (supermodel) is masculine because of the attraction of the masculine noun, *modèle*. But once she is abbreviated to *top* — a favourite French device — she becomes *une top*. — *Peter Graham, Mourjou, France*

Any answers?

IS IT better to live in an ugly house opposite a beautiful one or in a beautiful house opposite an ugly one? — *A G Crayford, London*

GIVEN I have only a few thousand pounds to invest, can anyone suggest a way in which I can acquire enough money to live well off the interest? — *Martin Pullinger, Hertfordshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

Soap with a surreal feel

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

W*HAT* **makes** ***Coronation Street*** **(Granada) so savoury is the writing. It is better than necessary. It is, ooh-ah, just a little bit more.**

Fred, Don and Jack are leaning on the bar of the Rovers. Fred is a butcher, who looks like a pig reflected in a spoon. Don is a one-legged taxi driver. If Jack had a cow, he would swop it for a handful of beans. Recently, while under the influence, they bought a racehorse. Horses, you may have noticed, don't buy people. Horses have got more sense.

Alec said to Rita: "Look at them three over there! To think that Walt Disney died before drawing any of them." The image catches your fancy immediately like flypaper.

Fred was bemoaning the feebleness of modern youth in general and his errand boy, Ashley, in particular. (Ashley is the one who would have joined the army, but he hasn't got the qualifications.) "Gastroenteritis!" said Fred. "They don't know what gastroenteritis is these days. They only have to sneeze and they're looking in their armpits for boils."

This, in case you weren't around at the time, is a reference to the black death, which announced itself with a sneeze. The assumption that you will catch all this on the wing is characteristic of the writing.

Roy Newton of Nottingham, who treasures such quotes in an old biscuit box, has reminded me of this unregarded richness. His personal favourite was Hilda Ogden, when someone at the Rovers was caught stealing. "Oooh, they ought to burn his clothes!"

If it weren't a soap, it would be surrealism.

Eddie Braben's scripts for Morecambe and Wise had the same unexpected spin. As Glenda Jackson once said, before she grew so serious, "My heart is beating like a whippet in a bowler hat!"

The writers of Coronation Street, who tend to be of long standing, do not work from background biographies. A new personality emerges, partly from the writer observing the actor.

This is obviously the case with Fred (John Savident), who has expanded like a black pudding to fill the space available.

There is more space available now Steve and Vicky are on their way. At the Rovers, the doors swing in and the doors swing out, and some pass in and others pass out. Vicky, the right little madam, has endured a dark night of the soul — well, two dark nights, Monday and Wednesday — wondering whether to testify against Steve. She did and he got two years.

It could be worse. The less fortunate are run over by a Blackpool tram or, worse, sent to live in Lowestoft.

Frankly, my dear, who cares? The question really agitating the nation is, will Fred get his feet under the oak at Rita's? Or, as a lesser scriptwriter would put it, the table.

Murder Most Horrid **(BBC2), no great favourite of mine, turned up trumps with the story of Daisy (Dawn French), a soft-hearted abbatoir worker, who is mistaken for an executioner in South America. For reasons too curly to disentangle, she executes the entire government by mistake. Live on TV. This, as you might anticipate, is a roaring ratings success. As Daisy says, "There hasn't been anything worth watching on telly recently."**

Gardeners' World **(BBC2) completed its tour to Holland. I went myself to see the tulip fields. It was like the battle of Waterloo. The tulips stand to attention in regimented rows until — don't look — they are all beheaded and their heads heaped in scarlet and gold pyramids at the edge of the field. As I once heard Marlene Dietrich sing to Montgomery of Alamein, "Where have all the flowers gone?"**

Uneasy ride . . . Peter Stormare and Steve Buscemi as the incompetent thugs in the Coen brothers' Fargo

Coming home to Minnesota

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

The story that follows is about Minnesota. It evokes the abstract landscape of our childhood — a bleak, windswept tundra, resembling Siberia except for its Ford dealerships and Hardee's restaurants. It aims to be both homey and exotic, and pretends to be true.

S*O SAYS* Ethan Coen, producer and co-writer of Fargo, in an introduction to the screenplay of the film which won Joel Coen, director and co-writer, the Best Director prize at Cannes this year. True or not — and the film is said to be based on a case of kidnapping in the state in 1987 — Fargo is the nearest thing the brothers Coen have accomplished to Blood Simple, the debut which forged their reputation.

There is, however, one vital difference. Fargo is a subtler exercise that seems to be in two minds about its characters. It is never certain whether to laugh at them or to treat them seriously. If this makes for an uneasy ride, it also gives the film its cutting edge as Frances McDormand's heavily pregnant detective plods determinedly after her gormless suspects.

Perhaps it is McDormand (Joel Coen's wife and one of America's most distinctive screen actresses) who humanises the film, though the Coens' ability to mix comedy with horror has often been admired before, and their observation of character is well-known.

Her performance is remarkable as she plays the comforting wife to her failed artist husband, has an abortive encounter with an old flame and slowly but surely catches up with her lumpen prey. One feels she could humanise a snake.

The snakes in this case are the thugs (Steve Buscemi and Peter Stormare) who are gingerly hired by William H Macy's inadequate husband — an inordinately ordinary man who has no idea what or who he is dealing with. Having dismally failed to raise loan money from either the bank or his overbearingly rich father-in-law, he wants his wife (Kristin Rudrud) kidnapped in order to extort a million-dollar ransom. But he hasn't even the guts to tell her of the plan.

Perhaps only a director like Ken Loach can make us laugh at his characters without any sense of patronising them. Possibly the Coens go too far to persuade us that Minnesota and its Scandinavian immigrants are a microcosm of America so enclosed as to be hilarious.

Yet the film's style matches and underscores its content so that there is hardly a false note. The Coens have often been accused of weightless resonance; of making films that look good but end up no more than tributes to a particular genre. The same accusation could be levelled against Fargo. But the Coen brothers are among the most able practitioners in America and this film is one of their best attempts to turn a familiar genre — the True Crime drama — into something miles away from the ordinary. And Frances McDormand sustains as holding a central character as any they have created.

Naked ambition in a world without men

ART
Adrian Searle

E*DGAR DEGAS* was a reactionary anti-Semite, a misogynist, a half-blind, photo-phobic hypochondriac and a curmudgeonly, misanthropic recluse. He was also a celibate who spent day after day, year after year, working from the naked female model in the chaotic surroundings of his semi-darkened Paris studio.

A sometime writer of sonnets, an amateur photographer and a compulsive art collector, Degas has been proclaimed "the social realist of the Impressionist camp", a man whose ambition it was to be an "old-masterly" painter of modern life, though Pissarro called him "an anarchist in art".

For Degas himself, however, to paint was to take part in tradition. He wanted to emulate the techniques of the Venetians, Titian and Veronese, and worked and re-worked his canvases with assiduous layers of tonal underpainting, scumbling and glazing. Yet he told the young Rouault, lamenting the lack of technical understanding, that "we paint like pigs".

These are but some of the many lives of Degas, whose later work is on display at the National Gallery until August 26 in an exhibition guest-curated by Richard Kendall. Degas, it turns out, had so many personal quirks and contrary identities that, were he a character in a novel, we wouldn't believe even in his fictional existence. Kendall, who has also written the catalogue, makes one not only believe in Degas, but goes a long way towards exploding the myths the artist cultivated around himself.

The exhibition takes us from 1886, when Degas was 51, until about 1910, when he all but ceased to be able to work. Old, deaf and nearly blind, he survived until 1917.

Organising the exhibition thematically, Kendall has hung Degas's work by subject — transitional works, the role of drawing in the artist's work, women at their toilette, the role of sculpture, the figure and the landscape. These overlapping themes serve to show the complexity of Degas's later development, when he created a world of self-multiplying, cohesive images, from which men — apart from the artist's own, intemperate gaze — are all but excluded.

The exhibition is subtitled Beyond Impressionism, and with good reason. Although the 1886 portrait of Hélène Rouart, standing behind an enormous chair at her father's desk, or the unfinished, sketched-in painting Nude Woman Drying Herself, with its single layer of thinned-out oil wash, might superficially be seen as belonging to an Impressionist canon, Degas's working procedures are marked by their extreme artificiality. The exhibition shows how he worked up his compositions in both pastel and oil through a series of technical manoeuvres which, according to Kendall, prefigure the production-line expeditions of Duchamp's multiples or Warhol's Factory silkscreens.

Degas, it turns out, copied and recopied his own drawings, frequently using tracings. Even his densely worked pastels were made on tracing paper, which is odd as it must be the least appropriate support for the coagulated layers of powdery pigment. Somehow, he got away with it, and the remarkable stability of these works remains something of a technical mystery.



Degas's Dancer Looking At The Sole Of Her Right Foot

While Degas relied on his living models and the meagre props in his studio — the fusty ballet tutu, the bath and the wash-stand — much of his work was completed in solitude in the large room above his living quarters. His sculpture — which apart from the earlier Young Dancer Of Fourteen Years, a cast of which is in the Tate, was never shown in his lifetime, except to a few privileged visitors — was produced, it appears, as a substitute for the live model.

That said, Degas's sculpture, modelled in wax then cast in bronze, provided an inspiration not only to Matisse and Picasso, but also to figurative sculptors throughout the 20th century. The tactility of these small works, replete with the artist's fingerprints and pinch-marks, is close in spirit to his own late oil paintings, for which, emulating late Titian (whose eyesight also failed), Degas often used his fingers rather than the brush. This was as much a physical as a visual relationship with material.

Degas's late work is a world of colour, light and physical closeness for an almost blind, self-exiled man fighting his indifference to the world about him and transcending himself, his meanness, his vile opinions, his false, protective character. In this marvellous exhibition Degas undresses himself.

Nijinsky staged the first bisexual ballet in 1913. It has finally been revived in Verona, writes **Judith Mackrell**

Jeux sans frontières

A *S A DANCER* with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Nijinsky became the superstar of his age — petted by aristocrats, revered by artists and ogled by both men and women. Yet as a choreographer he received some of the worst reviews in history. Though some critics appreciated the post-impressionist modernity of his works, others, who liked their ballets sentimental and exotic, were prone to bluster about "meaningless, pretentious contortions".

With that kind of press Diaghilev was hardly encouraged to treasure Nijinsky's works in his repertoire, and the fate of the 1913 ballet Jeux was typical. It disappeared after only nine performances and its steps were never written down.

One superficial reason why Jeux offended the ballet establishment was the pedestrian nature of its subject. It was about nothing more glamorous than a game of tennis. Yet much more confrontationally it showed a match that swung both ways. Not only did it present the male dancer/player flirting with two women, but also the women flirting with each other. This was probably history's first bisexual ballet, and Nijinsky's often brusque dance style did nothing to soothe his audience's nerves. As well as basing steps on recognisable sporting gestures he also quoted from a startlingly wide variety of dances, including the tango, the turkey trot and oriental movement. The result was an abrasively fragmented dance language that to us seems amazingly post-modern.

For decades it was only possible to read about this tantalisingly revolutionary work, to listen to Debussy's score and to study a dozen or so photographs and drawings. But during the past 15 years dance historians Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer have been slowly bringing the lost Nijinsky repertoire back to the stage. They've already reconstructed The Rite Of Spring and Till Eulenspiegel and last month at Verona's Teatro Filamonico, Jeux also came back to life.

The process of reconstructing these ballets was poignant and painstaking. It involved tracking dancers from the Ballets Russes to all parts of the globe and finding tiny elderly women who struggled out of their chairs to demonstrate fragments of the choreography they'd once performed. It involved trawling through pages of old diaries, letters, notebooks and reviews for information.

It also involved researching deep into Nijinsky's life. The human body is a live conductor of personal and cultural history, and Nijinsky's choreography was particularly receptive to outside influences. When they were studying Jeux, a softly curled hand gesture pictured in several illustrations had struck Hodson and Archer as curiously oriental. They later discovered that Nijinsky had been posing for Rodin at a time when the sculptor was working on studies of Asian dancers, featuring similar gestures. And then there was the Bloomsbury connection.

It's well known that Jeux was inspired by a nocturnal tennis game Nijinsky had watched at a party given by Ottoline Morrell in 1912, and that Bakst's backdrop was based on a view of Bedford Square. But Hodson and Archer also deduced that Nijinsky's love triangle was half inspired by a flirtation he'd observed between painter Duncan Grant and the two Stephen sisters — Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell. Photographs of Nijinsky in Jeux look uncannily similar to pictures of Grant, with the same averted head, open shirt and loose tie.

But though Hodson and Archer amassed a vast stock of movement images and though they had the score and scenario to guide their structure, they still had to make a ballet. Drawing on all that they'd learned about Nijinsky's style, they spent months moving around pictures and experimenting in the studio to figure out how to make transitions from one step to another.

N *O ONE* can gauge exactly how close to the original they've come, but when I saw their production of Jeux it certainly didn't feel like a late 20th century pastiche — it felt like a 1913 ballet.

The most obvious sense of period comes via the impressive reconstruction of Bakst's designs, yet the whole atmosphere of the work vibrates with an unfamiliar energy. For instance, we are immediately aware that Nijinsky's view of this tennis triangle is a foreigner's. Had Ashton made a similar ballet it would have been full of upper-class English jokes, but Jeux looks like a mating ritual spied on by a stranger. It is full of tension and inscrutable.

The ballet remains very difficult to look at. Nijinsky created Jeux as a kind of imagist poem, juxtaposing gestures in often bluntly contrasting styles. The man leaps sportively over a flower bed but his neck is arched violently like some archaic warrior. When the three dancers are flirting, the man suddenly ripples his neck like a cock crowing, then one of the women circles her hips or rises on to pointe in a helpless motion of arousal. The man clutches a woman in a tango hold and takes off across the stage, then changes partners at whim. One of the women spins around, beating her arms like a moth round the flame of the young man's beauty. All three swing their arms or race in energetic, sporty leaps. When they embrace as a pair or a trio, their bodies angle in austere, hieratic geometries. These are the seduction games of some strange species, vivid but only half decipherable. Even when Nijinsky creates more familiar classical sequences, the movement is always tense and disrupted by implosive stillnesses.

It's a short ballet, dense with shocking and beautiful information and as soon as it's over you simply want to see it again.

A classic dilemma

In the face of plummeting sales, is the classical music industry facing a crisis, asks **Dan Glaister**

B *EETHOVEN* would be glad of one of the golden rules of marketing: nothing increases sales like a controversy. If there is one thing the current furore over the choice of his Ode To Joy as the theme song for the Euro 96 soccer championships should do, it is increase interest in, and sales of, all things Beethoven.

It could not be more timely. Two years after the highs of the Three Tenors, classical music has come down to earth with a bump. Sales are down, classical music's share of the market is down, planned releases for next year are down.

"Things are very tough," admits Matthew Cosgrove, general manager of Warner Classics. "It is a cause for concern. There are too many things coming out." Too many things coming out? "We have a vast heritage of high-quality recordings, but we have to look at a more interesting repertoire. We have to get artists to look outside Brahms, Bruckner, Beethoven . . . We have to say to artists: 'Why are we making these records?' "

It is a worrying state of affairs when the general manager of Britain's second biggest classical music label wonders why the recordings are being made.

"Compilations are essential at the moment for our existence," says Cosgrove. "If you can generate 30,000 units and a high-profile chart position you can generate the income to record more obscure works." Even so, it is small beer.

The number one recording in the current British classical charts, culled from Classic FM's much-hyped top 300 recordings broadcast over Easter, sold only 3,000 units in a week. Hardly record-breaking stuff. The next six positions are occupied by recordings that purists would deride as not being proper classical music: The Best Classical Album In The World Ever!, The Ultimate Guitar Collection, 100 Popular Classics, Songs Of Sanctuary, Classic Moods . . . "You have to go down to number 30 before you get a proper classic CD," says Cosgrove, "but that only sold 228 units last week. You're not going to get fat on that."

One company that has put on some weight on the back of an extended repertoire is Hyperion. Its sales manager, Mike Spring, argues that the classical sector is paying the price of its own success. "It peaked, but it provided an artificial picture. Because of the boom caused by the arrival of CDs and then the success of people like the Three Tenors, a lot of people entered the market. Everything that was available anywhere became available everywhere."

Now the companies are playing chicken. "Everybody agrees that there is too much product but nobody's going to be the first to cut down. Consequently, individual sales have fallen. We tend to specialise in an off-the-beaten-track repertoire and there seems to be an insatiable demand for it," he says.

The majors are hoping to follow the example of specialist companies like Hyperion and Chandos. "It's something we'll have to look at very closely," say Cosgrove. "The way forward is to extend the repertoire with composers such as Korngold and Górecki, as well as the modern Soviet composers."

Alternatively, the majors can try to resuscitate their core repertoire with a new star. "We've had success with artist-led things," says John Kennedy, assistant manager of the classical department at the HMV store in Oxford Circus. "Things like the Alagna-Gheorghiu collaboration, Duets And Arias. People are very excited by the artists."

There may be a solution at hand. "We can't create Britpop," says Cosgrove. "But the Three Tenors are coming to London in July. We'll see what happens." Perhaps they'll knock Beethoven off the top spot.



The Three Tenors: their success obscured how badly the rest of the classical industry is doing

Companies stuck in a groove

T*HERE* **aren't going to be too many tears shed, one imagines, on hearing the news that the major record companies are having to come to terms with a sharp fall in their sales,** ***writes Andrew Clements*****.**

Sales of classical discs took a smaller share of the total British market last year (7.4 per cent) than at any time since the advent of the compact disc in 1982. There have been grim prognostications of the end of the classical recording industry as we know it and suggestions that even the biggest international stars can no longer rely on a stream of lucrative contracts to lure them into the studio.

Sympathy only extends so far. If the CD revolution brought a new lease of life to the archives of material that all the companies had acquired over the previous 60 years, the strategy they adopted for new recordings was often both cynical and short-sighted. It assumed that the wonders of the new technology would create an endless appetite for the basic repertory: that every artist signed up could be relied upon to sell a steady volume of the tried and the tested; that each bright young conductor would record his own cycle of the Brahms symphonies; every pianist put out his versions of the Beethoven sonatas and, fatally, that every record buyer would want to sample them. As complete saturation threatened, so their marketing strategies became more hysterical and banal.

It's natural that every generation of performers should want to establish its own distinctive credentials as interpreters of the great classics. But who will want to buy a new version of the Choral Symphony when mid-price and budget labels can offer performances by Klemperer and Fürtwängler, Kleiber and Jochum? The rise of the period-instrument movement promised to contradict this process of diminishing returns and to breathe new life into the standard repertory for a time. But even that is ultimately a diminishing return. When all of Brahms and Bruckner is available recorded on instruments of the period, when there is a complete Ring cycle heard with the kind of orchestra that Wagner would have known, then that niche market too will be approaching meltdown.

What have remained buoyant are the smaller labels, willing and able because of their lower overheads to specialise and to take calculated risks. Record buyers who are still expanding their collections may not be interested in yet another cycle of symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms or Mahler, but are willing to get to know works they would meet only rarely.

This discriminating section of the market may not be as large as the companies would like and will never sell the same as an all-star glitzy opera set. However, there are signs that some major labels are learning the lesson. But it is almost certainly too little too late for the kind of lavish sales that drive those companies.

From a foaming drink to an orgy of chocolate

Joan Smith

The True History of Chocolate
Sophie D Coe & Michael D Coe
Thames and Hudson 280pp £16.95

THE Marquis de Sade, banged up in various prisons and asylums for more than half his adult life, seems to have had two great passions, sex and chocolate. The shopping lists he regularly sent to his wife included boxes of ground chocolate, crème au chocolat, chocolate pastilles, large chocolate biscuits, vanilla pastilles au chocolat, and even cacao butter suppositories, which were regarded as a cure for piles.

Whether de Sade subscribed to the widely held view that chocolate on its own was an aphrodisiac is unclear but, during his long years of incarceration, he regularly indulged his craving and grew grossly fat.

In the previous century one of Charles II's doctors, Henry Stubbes, published an essay entitled The Natural History Of Coffee, Thee (sic), Chocolate And Tobacco in which he asserted that "the great Use of Chocolate in Venery, and for Supplying the Testicles with a Balsam, or a Sap" was already so well known that he would not treat the subject at length. He could not resist observing, however, that "if the amorous and martial Turk should ever taste it, he would despise his Opium", and claimed that sophisticated Londoners rated chocolate above aphrodisiacs like Spanish fly.

The authors of The True History Of Chocolate, both American anthropologists, have an open mind on the subject. The most extensive recent study, published in France in 1990, identifies four compounds in chocolate — caffeine, theobromine, serotonin and phenyl-ethylamine — and concludes that it is an effective anti-depressant which also enhances pleasurable activities, including making love.

It is not always clear whether such analyses of the chemical structure of chocolate are based on the raw cacao bean, the processed bean, cheap bars of chocolate containing low quantities of the fat (cacao butter) obtained from the processed bean, or a piece of luxury chocolate containing at least 50 per cent of the expensive "cacao solids" left behind when the fat is removed.

The French firm of Valrhona, south of Lyon, employs a full-time jury of 10 whose job is to eat chocolate all day, checking the quality of the company's products. Its Guanaja 1502 bar, the Rolls-Royce of chocolate, is named after the date and the place, an island north of Honduras, where Christopher Columbus first encountered a trading canoe belonging to the Maya. Chocolate played a central role in this sophisticated Mesoamerican culture, where it was enjoyed as a foaming drink and used as a form of currency. Indeed it was as a drink that chocolate was consumed for at least 28 centuries of its 3,000-year history.

The Marquis de Sade probably acquired his fondness for the stuff from his aristocratic family, although they would have been scandalised by the use to which he put it. One of the most persistent legends about his life concerns a ball he gave in Marseille in June 1772, at which chocolate pastilles laced with Spanish fly were served, causing the ceremonies to degenerate into an orgy. What is certain is that not one of the revellers, including de Sade himself, who supposedly seduced his own sister-in-law, had so much as tasted a Mars bar.



That this truck, carrying more than 100 youths, keeled over is perhaps less amazing than that it was photographed. It was taken by Sholihuddin for the Jawa Pos Daily, Indonesia, in May last year as football supporters came home from a match. Most of the passengers escaped unharmed. It is reproduced in the World Press Photo Yearbook 1996 (Thames & Hudson, £9.95) and can be seen with other World Press Photo award winners at the Royal Festival Hall, London, from June 21 to July 21

Junglee among the English

Laura Tennant

Anita and Me
by Meera Syal
Flamingo 328pp £9.99

MEERA SYAL'S first novel about an Indian girlhood in the Black Country succeeded in reducing me to tears on the bus — so much so that I had to stop reading to save my mascara — and, secondly, making me laugh out loud and insist on excerpting bits for the nearest friend.

Generally speaking, I don't even like the _faux naïveté_ of a child's eye view. Perhaps it is because other writers imagine children as mournfully uncomprehending, whereas Syal endows nine-year-old Meena with a full complement of self-awareness, wit and intelligence.

Any preconceptions the reader might have about an Indian childhood in Britain are swiftly deflated in Syal's prologue. "I do not have many memories of my very early childhood, apart from the obvious ones, of course. You know, my windswept, bewildered parents in their dusty Indian village garb, standing in the open doorway of a 747, blinking back tears of gratitude and heartbreak . . ." she writes, daring us to take her seriously.

Growing up in Tollington, a small former mining village, Meena is a "junglee", a wild girl, torn between the super-civilised world of her liberal, highly educated parents and the earthier lives of her white, working-class neighbours. Chief among them is Anita, 11 going on 18, pretty, bitchy, dangerous and irresistible.

Over the course of the book (a year in Meena's life), Syal traces the development of Anita's corrosive, manipulative friendship and Meena's loss of innocence in the face of village racism. At first it registers merely as the local shopkeeper's ignorance and tactlessness; by the end of the book it is embodied aggressively and overtly in the figure of Sam Lowbridge, village tough and Tollington's first skinhead. Meena is betrayed by Anita and her "Mama" seems about to be crushed by the burden of her new baby and the awfulness of the English but, in the nick of time, Meena's maternal grandmother arrives, bringing with her the healing essence of India.

Anita And Me is full of pleasures. Syal is as skilful at rendering the saucy, balley backchat of the Tollington women as she is at describing Meena's "uncles and aunties", her parents' Indian friends. The book is expertly structured and engagingly written, illuminated throughout by Meena's ironical irreverence and robustness of spirit.

Snapshot of the push-button age

Liz Jobey

George Eastman: A Biography
by Elizabeth Brayer
Johns Hopkins University Press
688pp £27.50

PHOTOGRAPHY is about the same age as George Eastman, the founder of Kodak, but his biography has less obvious mass-market appeal. Short on love interest and long on recipes for emulsions and coating machinery, the story of the man who invented continuous film and the cameras to go with it is also that of a man who spent his life in the town in which he was born, never married and, apart from excursions to Europe and Africa, worked pretty solidly until the day he died — at which late point events take an unexpected twist.

His was a textbook American life: a self-made millionaire by 40 (this was 1894), and a social philanthropist in the style of Carnegie and Rockefeller thereafter. This book similarly divides neatly into two halves; how Eastman made his money, and how he spent it. Nevertheless, Elizabeth Brayer manages to build some tension into what was, certainly in his early career, essentially a race to the patents office.

Rogue patents dogged Eastman's progress, and he spent a small fortune either fending off — or in serious cases, buying out — the competition. This constant fear of industrial sabotage is a reminder of how crowded the late 19th century was with inventions — many of them from amateurs like Eastman, whose alchemy began at night, in his home-laboratory, after a day at the bank.

In 1879, the year Eastman registered his first dry-coating machine, Thomas Edison patented his electric light-bulb and was working on improvements to Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, patented three years earlier. By the time Eastman christened his hand-held camera "Kodak" in 1888, both the phone and light-switch were in commercial use. Eastman's slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest", in retrospect, celebrated not just the simplicity of popular photography, but a hundred-and-one new labour-saving devices: the start of the push-button age.

If it hadn't been for a prospecting streak, which involved him in an abortive plan to buy land on Hispaniola in the Caribbean, Eastman might never have picked up a camera. Photographs seemed the best way of recording the territory. Experimenting with his own pictures (and the experience of lugging camera, tripod and the paraphernalia involved in coating glass plates with wet emulsion in the dark) drove Eastman to find faster, cheaper and more reliable methods.

After selling the rights to his coating machine in London, he moved on to perfecting strips of paper-backed film and a neat little rolling device which wound it on. He added a revolving shutter, and in 1887, "the little roll-holder breast camera", weighing only 22 ounces, with 100 exposures on one roll of film, arrived on the market. Eastman called it the Kodak.

"The letter K has been a favourite with me — it seems a strong, incisive sort of letter . . . Then it became a question of trying out combinations of letters that made words starting and ending with K . . . It became the distinctive word for our products." His word entered the language all too easily. The company had to insist on "Kodak camera", and "Kodak film" (much as Polaroid do today) to prevent the name becoming generic. It was used as a noun — "Kodakers" were everywhere, hoisting their little wooden boxes into people's faces — and a verb: to "Kodak as you go".

With the Kodak, and later the Brownie (named after Frank Brownell, who designed it), Eastman made his fortune. He secured it, though, by closing the circle of production: film sales, processing and developing paper would become more important than cameras in the future.

By 1890, Eastman was writing to his mother: "We are wealthy enough now to live in comfort . . . There is no liability of our ever having too little again." He embarked upon a twin programme of domestic and philanthropic expansion that made Rochester one of the best-endowed cities and Eastman one of the most comfortable and perennially eligible bachelors in America.

DESPITE descriptions of being taciturn and reserved, he seems to have taken huge pleasure in spending his money — on himself and his mother (though she never seems to have shared his dollar-happiness), as much as on his long list of beneficiaries. Between 1912 and 1920 (under the pseudonym of Mr Smith) he gave the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), from which he had hired graduate chemists with an amazingly high success rate, around $20 million. The University of Rochester received a medical school, dental school and the world-famous Eastman School of Music.

Sensibly, in dealing with a life that is rich in facts and poor in emotional evidence, Brayer steers clear of cod-psychology. The foreword by the current president of Eastman Kodak sets a corporate tone that is largely mitigated when you read about the restrictions previous biographers have faced when researching Eastman's life and the details of his death.

What happened to him? It wouldn't be fair to tell. It's surprising, that's all. But the biographer needs all the mystery she can get.

Celebration of lawlessness

Keith Thomas

Liberty Against the Law: Some Seventeenth-Century Controversies
by Christopher Hill
Allen Lane: The Penguin Press
354pp £25

IN 17th century England, the law was often regarded as an instrument of class oppression. "Truly most laws are but to enslave the poor to the rich," wrote the Digger Gerrard Winstanley; the state, he declared, was "a government of highwaymen".

In an age when political rights were confined to a minority, when many of the population lived at subsistence level and when it was a capital offence to steal goods worth more than a shilling, there was much to be said for this view. As the anonymous author of Tyranipocrit Discovered complained in 1649, the rich "make themselves thieves by Act of Parliament . . . They . . . hang a poor man if he do steal, when they have wrongfully taken from him all his maintenance."

In this, his 21st book on the period, Christopher Hill returns yet again to the theme of social injustice in early modern England. He reminds us of the game laws and the press gang, the criminal code and the acts against vagrancy. He sees them as parts of an oppressive legal system which secured the advance of capitalism by dispossessing the peasantry, obliterating customary rights and creating a landless class of wage labourers.

Liberty Against The Law is a celebration of those contemporaries who expressed their sense of alienation by deliberately flouting the law. Some did so for reasons of conscience, like the antinomians, who claimed sexual liberty on the grounds that the godly were exempt from the moral law: the Ranter Abiezer Coppe declared that he could "kiss and hug ladies and love my neighbour's wife as myself without sin".

Others broke the law so as to make a living. Hill instances poachers, highwaymen, smugglers and pirates. He has a lot of sympathy with these delinquents, many of whom he considers "performed a socially useful function". Highwaymen, indeed, may have been more honourable than some contemporary businessmen. He finds pirates particularly attractive because these "freemen of the seas" rejected wage labour and were often forthrightly egalitarian and anti-clerical in their views. He quotes a Captain Bellamy, who "would not submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security", claiming that "they rob the poor under cover of law forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our courage".

HILL emphasises the surprising degree of respect with which these law-breakers were treated in the popular literature of the age. The Robin Hood ballads kept alive the myth of the freedom of the greenwood, where gallant outlaws robbed the rich to help the poor and cocked a snook at figures of authority. Highwaymen could become folk heroes; and in many local communities offences like poaching and smuggling were not regarded as crimes at all.

Contemporary literature also expressed a degree of envy for those who, voluntarily or involuntarily, found themselves outside the system altogether. Hill shows how beggars and vagabonds were represented by poets as enjoying a freedom denied to those who owned property or worked for wages. John Dryden coined the expression "noble savage" to describe the superior life of those native peoples whose world was currently being devastated by the activities of European colonists.

The pleasures of poverty are an abiding theme in English literature and we should perhaps not take its 17th century version any more literally than we do the obsession of early 20th century Georgian poets with tramps and gypsies.

As Hill wryly concedes, it is unlikely that many of the ballads and plays in praise of the beggar's life were written by beggars. Nevertheless, he is right to point to the ambivalence with which contemporaries regarded the life of law-breaking vagabondage.

Whether he is also right to imply that wage labour was generally detested is more debatable. He thinks that "many must have felt" hostility to wage earning and surmises that the life of the gypsies "must have appealed to many". But the evidence suggests that people could work for wages by choice rather than coercion; and the growing supply of consumer goods encouraged them to prefer high earnings to leisure.

Neither can it really be true that the law had nothing to offer to the poor. Of course, any system which protected private property and upheld contracts was bound to favour the haves against the have-nots. But laws against petty theft and interpersonal violence were in everyone's interests.

The rather loosely related themes of the book will not be new to admirers of Christopher Hill's work. But his view of the 17th century is less influential in the age of New Labour than it was in the 1960s; and one can understand why he feels the need for some reiteration. Like all Hill's other books, his latest is full of ideas with which others will want to argue and from which everyone can learn. And how cheering to find an 84-year-old celebrating the virtues of lawlessness and anarchy!

Raise the scaffold high

Deborah Orr

A Perfect Execution
by Tim Binding
Picador 344pp £15.99

I READ Tim Binding's second novel on holiday, as part of a weirdly compulsive pig-out on new fiction. I wasn't sure I'd even bother with it; the title was such a turn-off. I'm fed up with killing as the centre of everything. So I read maybe a dozen others first.

But every single one of them, from Joanna Trollope to Roddy Doyle, from John Lanchester to Penelope Lively, featured murder, suicide and assassination — some kind, every kind, of violent death. Mostly it was casual violence, in there to generate excitement, or just to round things off. Novelists are turning into hooligans. Tim Binding is no hooligan.



Brutal truth: Tim Binding

The central narrative sounds like a typically post-Tarantino piece of violence fetishism. A Perfect Execution is about Jeremiah Bembo, alias Solomon Straw, the most professional and skilful of the men who travelled the railways of post-war Britain, carrying out the hangings required by the law courts. A market gardener by trade, he treats his second profession with the utmost respect, sacrificing for it all else that should be of value in his life. His goal, of course, is to conduct the perfect execution.

The first of many sub-plots tells the story of Jem's cousin and foil, Will. Jem is reserved, introverted, prudish. Will is brash, extrovert, frivolous, sensual. Jem becomes an executioner. Will becomes a vaudevillian comedian. The two represent the extremes of choice available to post-forties, rural Britons, and much of the book is concerned with how the second world war shaped British society through the fifties, sixties and seventies.

But mostly it deals with the consequences of institutionalised brutality — not just the war and the death penalty, but also the reactions of Jem and Will to the Punch and Judy show they run together as youths and, crucially, the village men's barbarism towards outsiders, and the weak among themselves.

The pivotal moment in the novel, and in Jem's life comes when a German pilot crashes on Jem's land. Binding's description of it is extraordinarily visceral and unsettling. During the epic scene, Jem loses the sight in one eye. His vision newly impaired, he is forced to witness his friends and peers attacking the defenceless pilot, hanging in his parachute from a tree. It is then that Jem resolves to become an executioner. He wants to protect men such as "his" German pilot from crude bloodlust, the like of which he witnesses later in his fellow executioners, and to kill men, who must die anyway, with brevity, understanding, purity and love. It is not until the life of one of Jem's victims entwines with his own that he realises how misguided is his well-meaning justification.

Taking the weight out of gravity

Eric Korn

The Physics of Star Trek
by Lawrence M Krauss
HarperCollins 188pp £12.99

Black Holes: A Traveller's Guide
by Clifford A Pickover
Wiley 210pp £19.99

TWO lightweight books on matters of gravity: one trivial and enlightening, one trivial and silly. Krauss writes for a non-specialist audience (not necessarily dedicated Trekkies) whom he treats like adults; Pickover for astrophysical groupies, black hole heads, quasar buffs.

Like most non-mathematicians with a smattering of physics I grasp the notions of relativity, variable clocks and space-time bending by gravity whenever I read an adequate explanation. I retain it for about a micro-second, or roughly one and a half light-furlongs.

Krauss has one of the more memorable versions: he likens the strange muddles of time-shortening and relativistic dilatation to the confusions we would have about length and distance if we shut one eye and turn ourselves into Cyclopses. If we open our pineal eye and think in four dimensions the paradoxes vanish. But time-keeping remains difficult: jaunting about at or close to the speed of light, the clocks on different vessels would move apart and ships be thousands of years early or late for rendezvous: no way to run a Space Navy. Hence the federation observes a speed limit; hence, when the USS Enterprise needs to hurry, the "warp drive", which is, Krauss argues, not theoretically impossible, but needs either negative energy (which he won't permit) or excessive amounts of the ordinary kind.

There's a picture of the giant accelerator in Illinois, and an amusing calculation of how far a year's production of anti-matter would take a starship. (Currently $48 million for a milliwatt. Of course it may get cheaper, or it may fall into the hands of a cartel of anti-sheikhs.)

Star Trek's most characteristic gadget is the transporter. And how, in any kind of imaginable universe, do you beam people? Do you digitise them and just transmit the information, or do you somehow liquidise them and transmit them as particles? Alas, neither: melting down the average earthling to sub-nuclear particles would require, calculates Krauss, the energy of a hundred one-megaton hydrogen bombs. On the other hand, reducing the body to pure energy would release the energy of a thousand H-bombs: "it is hard to imagine how to do this in an environmentally friendly fashion."

There's also the problem that the digitised information in an averagely complicated human being measures about 10^{28} megabytes, a hundred million million times all the information in all the books in all the libraries in the world; it would require a pile of computer discs 10,000 light years high.

BUT generous Krauss, extrapolating wildly from the improvements in his PC over the past 10 years, thinks this may be possible in a century or two. You have to ignore matters like quantal loss of information, which would make beam-travellers all blurred, like politicians. Is all this footling? You could argue that warp drive, inertial dampers, tractor beams and Doppler compensators are not technological but narrative devices, not to be analysed. But Star Trek authors have designed a non-whimsical, self-consistent universe, and it is instructive as well as entertaining to see how far it engages with the domain of the possible, which is still considerably larger than the domain of the actual. It's bracing to discover how much physicists don't know.

For all the threats to the Very Structure of Time Itself, Star Trek World is twinkly with hopes and good intentions. There's something benign, democratic, American about all this. No one is going to write the physics of Doctor Who, which is not about science — feasible, or possible or marginally impossible — but about spacemanship, about bluffing one's way through the galaxy: the Doctor, a mini superhero as English as Stilton, is admired for his self-deprecating wit.

Krauss discusses, with not too straight a face, impulse beams, cloaking, black holes, and wormholes. He lists Star Trek's 10 silliest mistakes. He speculates on the possibility of alien life, touching on whether any kind of life is such an improbable phenomenon, possible only within such a cosmically narrow range of conditions, that the fact that we exist at all should persuade us that the universe was made for our benefit. This, "the anthropic principle", seems to me ludicrous, a child's amazement that of all the houses in all the towns, it happened to be born in the one where Mummy and Daddy lived.

Krauss is genial, optimistic, modest. A lot of exotic science is painlessly imparted to anyone willing to make a small investment of imagination. Science fiction can make a lot of science painlessly accessible.

By contrast Pickover's tiresome book is aimed at a coterie. Facts and speculations are imparted by means of a narrative told in the second person, an unendurable artifice. There is a tweely didactic dialogue between the reader (allegedly) and a Mr Plex, purportedly a member of a diamond-skinned alien species called a Scolex.

To make matters coyer, there is Mrs Plex, a humanoid blonde. After each passage of dialogue there follows "the science behind the science fiction". (As Peter Ustinov said, "This is a joke. When I have finished laughing at it I shall explain it point by point.") Everything is designed to present science as the activity of an inward-looking and obsessional coterie, a chosen tribe: the Nerds of Nerdistan.

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

For the sake of tradition

Paul Evans

THE SKIRL of bagpipes announced the start of the procession and brought the soft spring rain down from the hilltops of the Welsh Marches into the little Shropshire village of Aston on Clun. Down the hill came the piper followed by a pony and trap and children dressed in 17th century costume shepherded by Pam, a modern-day earth-mother. The procession joined a throng of about 200 people waiting by the Arbor Tree. The child bride and groom and the rest of the wedding party assembled in front of the tree. There were photographs, a speech from the town crier and the singing of the Arbor Tree song. Accordions played, morris dancers whacked their sticks and Pam scattered white petals over all and sundry.

This village pageant is the annual re-enactment of a famous local wedding. Back in 1786, Squire Marsdon of Oaker married Mary Carter of Sibdon who left money for the tree to be "dressed" annually on their anniversary, which coincided with the festival of Arbor Day. The ceremony of dressing the Arbor Tree goes back to May 29, 1660 when Charles II celebrated the restoration of the monarchy. The ancient black poplar that stood in the village of Aston on Clun for centuries was hung with flags and ribbons, the legendary sole survivor of those decorated by Charles II.

That these celebrations are the last vestiges of pagan tree-worship and fertility rites may have been too much for church-going villagers to admit to. Nevertheless the festival, reinterpreted through successive performances to suit the values of changing times concealed, like the thick, rugged bark of the tree itself, a living mystery. Last autumn, disaster struck and the tree fell down.

Not long after the Arbor Tree came down I went to Aston on Clun to pay my respects. I went to the village shop where Pam had folded away the flags, including some from America, Canada and the Sultanate of Oman. I asked if this meant the end for the Arbor Day pageant. "Not while there's breath left in my body," said Pam.

There's obviously a lot of breath left in Pam. The stump was removed, the area landscaped and a new tree planted a few months ago. A scion of the original black poplar, the new Arbor Tree is already 20ft tall and looks very fine. The bigger flags are on poles next to the trunk and bunting festoons the branches. The villagers of Aston on Clun have their tree back and, come rain or shine, the Arbor Day procession looks set to dance into the next millennium.

But is this like the old country broom: even with a few new brush-heads and a few new handles, it's still the same broom? Has the ritual become more important than the tree? Black poplar *Populus nigra* is a most distinctive English tree which characterised the medieval countryside. Since 1800 it has become rare in England and even more uncommon in continental Europe. A tree of flood-plains and meadows, by its nature it produces huge leaning towers which eventually fall over, throwing out new roots and branches from the prostrate trunk.

It will take centuries for the new tree to achieve the ruggedness of the original. Whether or not children will re-enact the wedding ceremony in its shadow and whether the flags of this and other nations will fly from its branches, whenever spring rains drift through the valleys of the Welsh Marches long may the Arbor Tree live.

Chess Leonard Barden

SLOUGH defeated the reigning champions, Midlands, last month in the deciding match for Britain's chess league.

Both teams were packed with GMs and IMs, and victory means a place in next season's European Cup, an event where the UK has a dismal record.

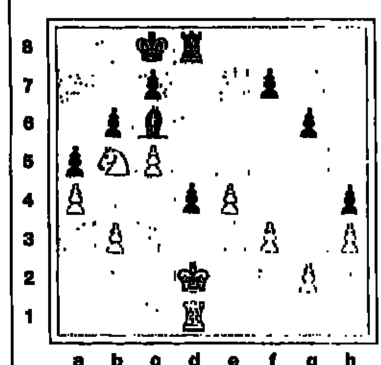
Slough's victory was another landmark for the team sponsor, local businessman Nigel Johnson, whose backing has already helped Adams, Miles, Lalic and other GMs qualify for the squad.

Johnson is performing a valuable service for British chess, but even his powerful group is not assured of European success.

Sarajevo were hot favourites for the 1995 European Cup when they fielded Bosnia's Silver-medal winning olympiad team, strengthened by Garry Kasparov, no less, and Adams. Their semi-final opponents, Yerevan, were without their best player and arrived for the match with no database computer, no chess set, and no reserve.

The night before the finals one of the Armenians went down with acute pain in his knee and was taken to hospital. He took part under anaesthetic and on crutches. The result? Yerevan 4, Sarajevo 2, with Adams losing and Kasparov scraping a lucky draw.

Adams was also involved in the strangest incident of this year's UK league.



McDonald v Adams

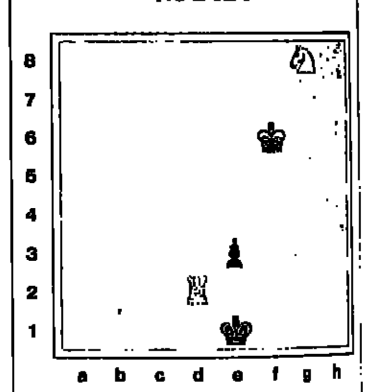
IM Neil McDonald had some advantage from the white side of an Exchange Ruy Lopez, and now played 1 cxb6 Bxb5 2 axb5 c5??

McDonald, however, was so shocked that he wondered whether he had missed some obscure footnote in *en passant* captures when the capturing side has pawns on both the fifth and sixth ranks.

Eventually he played 3 bxc6 ep, Adams resigned, and the spectators and journalists said, "Of course, White is winning anyway since 2 . . . cxb6 fails to 3 Rc1+ and 4 Rc6 when Black soon loses pawns."

Then Adams's team-mate Bogdan Lalic pointed out (1 cxb6 Bxb5 2 axb5) Kb7!! when 3 bxc7 Kxc7 plans Kb6xb5 gobbling up the white b pawns with fair chances of achieving a draw.

No 2424



White to play and win (by D Gurgenidze). White's rook has to move, and only one square secures victory.

No 2423: 1 Bb1. If Nxc6+ 2 Qxc6+ Kxc6 3 Be4. If 1 . . . Kc4/d4 2 Qg4+ Kb3/c33 Qb4 or 2 . . . Ke3 3 Bg5 or 2 . . . Kd5/e5 3 Qe4. If 1 . . . Kc5 2 Qf5+ Kd4 3 Qe5. If 1 . . . b4 2 Qf5+ Kxc6 (Kc4 3 Qd3) 3 Be4. If 1 . . . Na6 2 Qd7+ Kc4 2 Qd3.

Quick crossword no. 317

Across

1 Grab (6)
4 Organ symbolising ill humour (6)
8 Proportion (5)
9 Gatecrash (7)
10 Liberty (7)
11 Inn (6)
12 Fastening with covered point (6,3)
17 Yellow fruit (5)
19 Conflict of 1899-1902 (4,3)
21 Search — for jumble? (7)
22 Outsize person or thing (5)
23 Shellfish (of the heart) (6)
24 Make less resonant (6)

Down

1 Absolution: if short, summary treatment (6)
2 Lady of the theatre (7)
3 Mass of water particles (6)
5 Settle (a quarrel) (5,2)
6 Gloat (5)
7 It has point and eye (6)
9 That cannot be changed (9)
13 Type of pigeon (7)
14 Fresh (of eggs) (3-4)
15 Minister of religion (6)
16 Positively charged particle (6)
18 Copy (5)
20 Bird of prey (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

LAST WEEK I described a match in which an opponent used a legal technicality to get a hand washed out after his side had obtained a less than perfect result.

Thirsting for revenge, I picked up these cards at game-all on the re-deal:

♠A3 ♥J65 ♦A97 ♣A10954

East, the legal eagle on my right, opened the bidding with a pre-emptive three hearts. I had fair values, but not enough for me to risk entering the auction at this level.

I passed, as did West, and my partner emerged with a takeout double.

What would your call be after a pass by East?

South	West	North	East
You			3♥
No	No	Double	No
?			

My options were pass, some number of clubs or, perhaps, a cue bid of four hearts.

If you gave the hand to a panel of experts, the majority vote would probably be for a pass, and on a normal day that is what I would have done. After all, we ought to beat three hearts by a couple of tricks, and who knew whether we could find a safe haven if I bid?

But this was not a normal day. Still boiling because of the previous deal, I leapt defiantly (or foolishly) to six clubs. West led the two of hearts, and my partner put down a much better dummy than I deserved:

South	North
♠ A3	♠ KQ74
♥ J65	♥ A3
♦ A97	♦ 108
♣ A10954	♣ KQJ32

Despite partner's excellent trump support and all-round strength, six clubs appeared to have absolutely no play at all. A diamond loser and a heart loser seemed inevitable.

Desperately, I searched for some miraculous lie of the cards that would give me any chance at all in this contract. Finally I found a faint chance, but any chance at all was better than none. Can you see a ray of hope before reading on?

Win the ace of hearts, draw trumps in two rounds, play three top spades discarding a diamond on the third, ruff dummy's last spade and exit with ace and another diamond. This will work if West started life with precisely a singleton heart and all three of the top diamond honours, or any seven-card diamond suit.

Given that East had opened three hearts in first position at game-all, the chances were around 6-1 against.

Surely that was not too much for Nemesis to arrange in order to punish East for his previous ploy? And she did! This was the full hand:

	North	
	♠ KQ74	
	♥ A3	
	♦ 108	
	♣ KQJ32	
West		East
♠ 109865		♠ J2
♥ 2		♥ KQ109874
♦ KQJ65		♦ 432
♣ 86		♣ 7
	South	
	♠ A3	
	♥ J65	
	♦ A97	
	♣ A10954	

On winning the second round of diamonds, West had no option but to give a ruff and discard, so I made my slam.

To give East his due, he saw the funny side — so I resisted the temptation to ask if he wanted another re-deal!

Motor Racing Spanish Grand Prix

Surfs him right . . . Schumacher heads for his first victory since joining Ferrari PHOTOGRAPH: BEN RADFORD

Rain in Spain spurs Schumacher

Alan Henry in Barcelona

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER produced one of the greatest wet-weather drives in history to secure an overwhelming victory in the Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday — his first win for Ferrari.

His triumph opened up the world championship after the points leader Damon Hill spun off the near-flooded Circuit de Catalunya and crashed his Williams-Renault into the pit wall. "I am just relieved to be in one piece," said Hill. "I am pleased to be out of the race."

Schumacher won by more than 45 seconds from Jean Alesi's Benetton to move into joint second in the championship, on 26 points with Hill's team-mate Jacques Villeneuve, who finished a strong third in only his third race in rain. Only six of the 20 starters finished.

At the finish the world champion was mobbed by his mechanics, who were celebrating Ferrari's second win in 31 races and their first since Alesi won in Canada 12 months ago.

Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who escaped unhurt from a crash in the warm-up which shattered the rear of his Sauber, was fourth in the spare car. McLaren's Mika Hakkinen and Ligier's Pedro Diniz finished fifth and sixth.

Such was Schumacher's mastery that his victory became probable once he had surfed through into the lead on lap 12, having overcome a slight problem with his clutch at the start.

However, he also had to contend with a mechanical problem from half-distance when his V10 engine lapsed on to nine cylinders and ran slightly erratically through to the end of the race. The handicap might have affected the outcome had conditions been dry, but in such heavy rain the world champion's skill was the deciding factor.

"At half-distance, around lap 33, I just had about eight or nine cylinders working, which wasn't too pleasant because I worried that it would be difficult to finish, but the car stayed together," he said.

Hill made a poor start from pole position, suffered two spins and was running a lowly eighth when his race ended on the 11th lap.

"I made mistakes and had the wrong-set up on the car," he admitted. "It was really down to me what happened today, but the big problem was visibility."

Athletics European Cup

Christie keeps the world at a distance

Duncan Mackay in Madrid

THE "will he or won't he?" games continue but the biggest tease in athletics must surely have made up his mind about going to Atlanta, after a weekend when he continued to rewrite the record books but heard his claim to be the world's fastest man dismissed by a young pretender to his Olympic crown.

After waking up to the news that Trinidad's Ato Boldon had clocked the fastest time of the year in America, Linford Christie went out here to claim a record 15th European Cup title, winning the 200m in 20.25sec.

And surely he will not be able to resist the challenge thrown down to him by Boldon, who said: "Only myself, Donovan Bailey or Carl Lewis can win the Olympics."

They are words that will be like a red rag to a bull. Christie, after a winter in Florida, has muscles as sculptured as one of Hemingway's matadors and is not looking like a man ready to embrace retirement.

The 200m victory was added to his 10.04sec 100m triumph on Saturday, when he had broken his own cup record by one-hundredth of a second to continue his proud history of not having lost to a European sprinter in a major championship for 10 years.

On Friday he was due to take a step up in class when he was to compete in Nuremberg, meeting Bailey for the first time since the Canadian accused the Briton of faking injury in last year's world championship, which Bailey won.

But, as ever, whereas Christie covered himself in glory on the track, his behaviour off it let him down. First he was Captain Invisible when he snubbed his colleagues by arriving too late on Friday to attend the team meeting, then he refused to display the logo of Britain's official team sponsor on his team vest.

Christie . . . dominant

Jonathan Edwards was the only other British winner of an individual event on Sunday, although Mark Richardson, Jamie Baulch, Mark Hylton and Du'aine Ladejo combined to win the 4x400m relay.

Edwards's winning leap of 17.79 metres was achieved at almost the same time Christie was winning the 200m. It helped kick-start a late British surge, in which they recovered to reclaim second place behind Germany; it was the fifth consecutive occasion Britain had filled that position. The British women were sixth, Germany again winning.

It was in this event in Lille 12 months ago that Edwards started pushing back the boundaries of triple jumping when he leapt a monster wind-aided 18.43m and launched a summer which included two world records and a world title. He will surely be the first name on the selectors' list for Atlanta, but his stuttering season continued.

He managed to win easily, with his wind-assisted second-round effort half a metre further than the runner-up Vladimir Kravchenko. Yet after his peerless 1995 his performance here, where he fouled the other three jumps he attempted, combined with his tentative show in Atlanta two weeks ago, did not dispel the sense that Edwards is vulnerable and uncertain whether he can ever recapture his record-breaking form of last year.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

On Euro marks

TOP marksmen from the Premiership will provide the firepower for England's campaign in Euro 96 which gets under way on Saturday. Terry Venables announced the squad a few hours after the England team arrived back from their Far East tour.

His summer collection of 22 is: David Seaman, Tim Flowers, Ian Walker, Gary Neville, Tony Adams, Steve Howey, Gareth Southgate, Sol Campbell, Stuart Pearce, Philip Neville, Darren Anderton, Steve Stone, Paul Gascoigne, Paul Ince, David Platt, Jamie Redknapp, Steve McManaman, Les Ferdinand, Robbie Fowler, Nick Barmby, Teddy Sheringham and Alan Shearer.

Between them, Shearer (37), Fowler (36) and Ferdinand (29) scored 102 goals for their clubs last season, and Sheringham netted another 24.

Euro 96 is a virtual sell-out, with fewer than 150,000 of the 1.4 million tickets still to be sold. Organisers described the demand for tickets as "phenomenal".

It is the biggest football festival Britain has witnessed for 30 years, and if you'd like to know more about it there are more than a million words on Eurosoccer.com — the Guardian and Vauxhall/Opel internet site. The URL is http://www.eurosoccer.com

JAPAN and South Korea are to share soccer's 2002 World Cup, the first to be held in Asia. The executive of Fifa, the sport's world governing body, meeting in Zurich, endorsed a European proposal to hold the first finals of the 21st century in the two Asian countries. The decision to co-host the finals was seen as a bitter defeat for Fifa president, 80-year-old João Havelange, who was seen as a staunch opponent of the idea to split the event.

AN "incident" on board a Cathay Pacific plane bringing the England soccer team home from their pre-Euro 96 Far East tour has landed the players with a bill estimated at £5,000. Those responsible for the damage to an in-flight TV set will share the cost, said the England coach, Terry Venables. The set was damaged after a party allegedly got out of hand.

SCOTLAND'S build-up to Euro 96 suffered a further setback when they were beaten 1-0 by Colombia at the Orange Bowl in Miami. It was their fourth defeat in the last five international friendlies. Scotland's tormentor was Faustino Asprilla, who got the winner eight minutes from time in driving rain.

The Republic of Ireland suffered a similar fate when they went down to Portugal in Dublin by a last-minute goal from Antonio Folha. In their second international in seven days, the Republic drew 2-2 with Croatia, while at Windsor Park, Northern Ireland ended 1-1 with Germany.

Meanwhile Wales began their World Cup qualifying campaign in great style with a 5-0 win against Group Seven minnows San Marino. Marks Hughes got two goals while Ryan Giggs, Andy Melville and Mark Pembridge contributed one each.

WARWICKSHIRE, holders of the Benson & Hedges Cup, scraped through to the semi-finals of the competition by beating Glamorgan at Cardiff. Dermot Reeves's side were bowled out for 239 in 48.5 overs but, despite an aggressive knock of 75 by Glamorgan captain Matthew Maynard and 68 by Ottis Gibson, the home side failed to reach their target by just 12 runs, Reeves picking up three wickets for 39. At Old Trafford, Gloucestershire (158) were defeated by Lancashire by five wickets. In the other matches Northamptonshire (293-7, Rob Bailey 105no) defeated Kent by 23 runs at Northampton, and Surrey (229) were swamped by Yorkshire by nine wickets (David Byas 116no) at The Oval. The semis will provide a Roses clash between Lancashire and Yorkshire while Warwickshire will meet Northamptonshire.

ALAN MULLALLY, Leicestershire's left-arm fast bowler, Min Patel, a left-arm spinner who plays for Kent, and the Essex all-rounder Ronnie Irani are the three uncapped players called up to the England squad for the first Test with India starting at Edgbaston this week. There are recalls for Nasser Hussain, Nick Knight and Chris Lewis. The full squad is: Atherton, Knight, Crawley, Thorpe, Hick, Hussain, Irani, Russell, Lewis, Cork, Martin, Mullally and Patel.

TIM LAMB, the former Oxford University, Middlesex and Northamptonshire pace bowler, is to be the Test and County Cricket Board's next chief executive. The 43-year-old Lamb will succeed Alan Smith in November — moving up a rung from his present post of TCCB secretary. The TCCB chose him ahead of Warwickshire's 51-year-old vice-chairman, Tony Cross.

THE first "Ryder Cup" for students will be held in Scotland next year. The Palmer Cup, sponsored by the Arnold Palmer Golf Company, will be played at St Andrews in August. The annual event for teams of eight amateurs will bring together the best young golfers from both sides of the Atlantic for the first time.

TWO motorcycle riders, New Zealand's Robert Holden, aged 37, and 28-year-old Briton, Mick Lofthouse, died in separate crashes while warming up during the last day of practice for the Isle of Man TT races. The deaths took the toll this year to three following the death earlier of Aaron Kennedy, from Warwickshire, who fell from a sidecar. Last year three racers were killed and an eight-year-old girl was badly injured when a bike ploughed into spectators. A total of 167 competitors have died since the event was first run in 1907.

BARRY FRY, sacked as football manager by a number of clubs — Birmingham City last month became the the latest to fire him — made the most important signing of his career last week. He bought Second Division Peterborough United for nearly £1 million and became its owner-manager.